

RAISING FUTURE MISSIONAL LEADERS
THROUGH KOINONIA CROSS RELATIONSHIPS
IN A HOUSE-BASED DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY IN CAMBRIDGE, MA

A THESIS-PROJECT
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BY
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To the “abbots” and brothers who have been part of Concord House Brothers Ministry
since our founding in 1993;

To Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior,
and the King and Bridegroom who is returning soon for His bride, the church;

And to my Heavenly Father who adopted me into His family
through the blood of His only begotten Son.

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This thesis-project is not my story but the story of a chorus of lives intertwined through *koinonia* at Concord House. I want to thank all the brothers of Concord House for the privilege of being the first to attempt to capture our living history. They enthusiastically and earnestly responded to questionnaires, participated in Zoom focus groups, and shared their experiences and reflections. I am compelled to keep running the race because they run alongside and behind me every step of the way. Indeed, we have experienced “how good it is when brothers dwell together in unity” (Ps 133:1)!

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ABSTRACT

In a university context marked by individualism, over-commitment, mobility, and declining religious affiliation, and a 21st-century church marked by the increasing challenge of developing more leaders, how might a university-facing ministry raise missional leaders and remain effective amid changing needs and perspectives? This thesis-project examines one fruitful model in the Concord House Brothers Ministry, a 30-year-old house-based discipleship community of Antioch Baptist Church in Cambridge, MA, and identifies six key factors – including the centrality of Koinonia Cross relationships – contributing to its fruitfulness across generational cohorts.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING: A MISSIONAL MONASTERY IN THE CITY

A Beginning

It all began one weekend in the spring of 1993 when the 5 of us decided to push aside our schedules and get together at Joshua's apartment. We trekked across the city from our respective campuses – Boston University, Harvard, MIT, and Tufts – all the way to Boston College, which to my freshman self felt like an endless journey by subway. We'd been getting to know each other that semester through a weekly Saturday morning discipleship group, studying the book of Acts under the leadership of Dr. Rebekah Kim, then the college director of Berkland Baptist Church in Boston (renamed as Antioch Baptist Church in 2011). With the encouragement of our campus staff, we began weekly dinners on each other's campuses, then joined weekly prayer meetings with the whole church, and then a camping trip with a few older brothers. Working our way through the book of Acts, we learned about the birth of the church and the work of the Spirit that produced a powerful unity drawing others into their midst, and we longed to enter into that same story, 2,000 years later. What would it be like to be devoted to the Word of God and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer? To be together and share all things in common, to meet each other's daily needs, to have full and generous hearts, to praise God constantly, and to experience God adding to our number because of it? Was such a life possible?

We knew it was indeed possible. We saw it being lived out by the team who had moved from Berkeley, CA, to plant a church in Boston in 1991, led by the visionary duo of Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim. Witnessing those lives up close was what added *us* to the number of *this* church. But we wanted to know, "Is such a life possible for us *right now*, as freshmen and

sophomores in college?” Spending the weekend at Joshua’s apartment brought us one step closer. Cooking curry for dinner. Laughing together. Sharing dreams and aspirations. Talking late into the night, sharing some of our most personal thoughts and experiences. Falling asleep on the living room carpet. Doing things that guys do only when they start to let their guard down and begin to trust each other.

That first weekend left us wanting more and we tried to meet up as regularly as we could. But it was difficult to put things on hold every weekend to be together. And seeing each other a couple of times a week seemed a far cry from the description in Acts 2. We began dreaming – if only we could live in the same apartment and share everyday life! Alas, we’d already committed to our dorms on each campus for the fall, and before we knew it, the busyness of finals and moving back home for the summer pushed our conversations to the back burner.

While at home, I got a call from one of the staff in Boston. I’d casually shared with him about our desire to live together, and he brought up the topic at a church staff meeting. Upon hearing about our response to the book of Acts, Dr. Rebekah put out a radical idea: What if these 5 brothers moved into the upstairs unit of the two-family home owned by Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah? To Dr. Rebekah, it seemed clear that God was inviting them to fulfill the calling he placed on their lives to “raise leaders for the 21st century.” The women staff living there at the time put up a mild protest, but they, along with the rest of the leadership, recognized the Spirit was at work and with one accord agreed to move out and create a space for us to be disciplined under Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah.

The invitation was more than we asked or imagined. Their home, dubbed “Concord House” because of its location on Concord Avenue in Cambridge, was just a 15-minute walk from Harvard Square and the red line on the T (Boston’s subway system), and Dr. Rebekah’s

mother, Ho Re Lee “Halmoni” (“grandmother” in Korean) was even willing to cook dinner for us twice a week to help ease the transition. Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah set the rent at less than half the going rate in Harvard’s 02138 zip code. And most significant – though we had no idea at the time – was the opportunity to live just a flight of stairs away from Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah.

In late August, we came back to Boston for a new academic year and moved into Concord House. So began a new chapter in our lives and the life of our church. Concord House ministry was born.

The Thesis-Project Question

At the writing of this thesis-project, exactly 30 years have passed since the first set of brothers moved into Concord House. Over those years, a steady stream of young men ranging from their late teens to their 30s has lived at Concord House (except for one year when a group of sisters committed to long-term missions moved in for training) – college students, grad students, and young working professionals. Of 100 young men who have lived at Concord House, 56 remain within our sister church network and 49 of those 56 are actively serving in a formal ministry role – 5 ordained pastors, 8 deacons, and 36 lay bi-vocational ministry staff. And that doesn’t take account of how those who moved on to other contexts are continuing to serve in a missional capacity. For research focus and access to detailed information, this project will center on examining those who have remained within Antioch Baptist Church and its sister church network. Today, the ministry is stronger than ever. It has extended from a single house to a total of 3 adjacent houses, with a new fourth house currently being readied for residents.¹ A

¹These houses are distinguished by residents and church members as “Concord House 1,” “Concord House 2,” “Concord House 3” and “Concord House 4.” In the summer of 2023, we began to also use the name “Concord Cave of Adullam” (or “CCA 1, 2, 3, or 4”) in reference to the cave where David and his men hid in 1 Samuel 22. This theme is more fully explored in Chapter 2.

total of 26 young men currently reside at Concord House, all of whom are committed to being trained as missional leaders in whatever way God might call them to serve.

This thesis-project is driven by one over-arching question: How has a house-based discipleship community in Cambridge, MA, consistently and effectively trained college students and young adults over the past 30 years to become missional leaders? This question is particularly compelling considering the challenge of ministering to university students and young professionals, the durability and relevance of the ministry across 3 generational cohorts, and the consistent track record for producing missional leaders. The working hypothesis is that living-in-community discipleship is an effective model for raising future leaders across generations because it is an ideal setting to foster Koinonia Cross relationships.²

A Church in Cambridge and a House on Concord³

Concord House is in the Huron Village neighborhood of Cambridge, MA, exactly one mile north of the main gate of Harvard Yard. If Greater Boston is the “Hub of the Universe” then Cambridge is the axle at the center of the hub: founded by Puritans alongside Boston in 1630, the home of both Harvard and MIT and a global center for tech and biotech innovation. In 1992, a year after the Kims moved from Berkeley to Cambridge, Dr. Paul’s sister purchased and gifted them the two-family home on Concord Avenue at the request of their mother who desired the home to eventually go to her grandson (Dr. Paul’s son), Philip. Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah regarded the home – located so close to Harvard – as God’s provision for their vision to build a

² The Koinonia Cross model, developed by Dr. Rebekah Kim, will be fully explored in chapter 2.

³ The historical summary provided in this section is drawn from the oral history of Berkland Baptist Church, Antioch Baptist Church, and Concord House, well-known to the author as a 30-year member of these communities. All facts presented here were verified with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim and cross-referenced with other written and video accounts of this history.

church-based campus ministry in Boston, just as they had done through “Hillegas House” (on Hillegas Road) just a few blocks from the gates of the University of California at Berkeley.

From the founding of Berkland Baptist Church in Berkeley in 1981, Drs. Paul and Rebekah were pioneers on numerous fronts. Dr. Paul had a vision to plant churches in the most difficult places for the Gospel, and Dr. Rebekah had committed her life to reaching college students who – like herself as a sophomore at Seoul National University, the premier university in Korea – were searching for meaning, purpose, and a reason to live.⁴ Those two callings brought the Kims to plant a college-centered church near one of the most spiritually challenging campuses in the country in Berkeley. The local Baptist association recognized the importance of their unique mission and helped them buy a small church building on the border between the towns of Berkeley and Oakland, inspiring the name “Berk-land,” purposefully leaving out any mention of national or ethnic identity. Though both Kims immigrated from Korea to the United States as adults, they began Berkland Baptist as an English-speaking ministry with a vision to reach second-generation Asian Americans – and eventually the nations – for Christ. Drs. Paul and Rebekah proved to be remarkable partners in ministry. Dr. Paul devoted himself to preaching, church administration, and denominational leadership while Dr. Rebekah exercised her gifts in Bible teaching, evangelism, and discipleship. Both were bi-vocational ministers: Dr. Paul served as a hospital chaplain and Dr. Rebekah worked in hospital administration while also attending seminary. These are but a few of the radical choices they made 40 years ago that have now become best practices for church planting.

For ten years, the Kims prayed, preached, taught, and fed, welcoming students with open hearts, open hands, and an open fridge. The Lord added daily to their number. What began with 5

⁴ Dr. Rebekah Kim made this personal vow to college ministry before the Lord on December 1, 1971, 9 months after she made a decision to become a Christian.

founding members – the Kims, their newborn daughter Pauline, Grandma Ho Re Lee, and Dr. Rebekah’s nephew – became a thriving ministry of more than 500, making it the second-largest student organization at Berkeley after the Asian Dance Troupe. A group of the earliest students caught the vision and committed to stay after graduation, enrolled in seminary (while working as lawyers and engineers), and joined the ministry team.

Then came a call for the church to begin a new work in the one college town arguably more challenging than Berkeley: Boston, Massachusetts. Angela Um (née Suh) had attended Berkland Baptist as a freshman at Berkeley and then was accepted to Harvard as a sophomore transfer. After struggling to find a suitable church near Harvard and seeing the great dissatisfaction, disillusionment, and hunger among her classmates, she wrote a letter to the Kims asking them to consider planting a church in the Boston area. After a season of prayer, the Kims and the staff team sensed the prompting of the Spirit to respond to this Macedonian call and began planning to send the Kims’ first disciples from Berkeley – Andy and Grace Pak – to plant a sister church. In November 1990, the Kims took a ground-laying trip to Boston and upon their return made a bombshell announcement to the staff. The Paks would not be going to Boston. The Kims would be.

During the ground-laying trip to Boston, Dr. Rebekah took a prayer walk through Harvard Yard. Looking around the Yard, Dr. Rebekah saw students like herself – students heavy-laden with the expectations of families and troubled by the dawning reality that even a place like Harvard could not provide meaning and purpose for their lives. And suddenly, Dr. Rebekah undeniably heard the Lord challenging her and Dr. Paul not to send their disciples here, but rather to take up the cross and come to Boston themselves. Later that day, she shared her

conviction with Dr. Paul, and sensing the clear direction of the Spirit, he agreed without a moment's hesitation.

When they announced the change of plans to the stunned staff in Berkeley, the Kims referenced the example of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:2 (English Standard Version) – “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” The first New Testament missionaries sent out from the church at Antioch were the leaders of the church. Knowing they were following Biblical precedent, the Kims were at complete peace. They entrusted the thriving church in Berkeley into the hands of disciples raised over the past 10 years and set out once again by faith to begin a new work. Berkland Baptist Church-Boston was inaugurated on January 6 in a small room at First Baptist Church in Cambridge with a planting team of 18 including the Kims, 74-year-old Grandma Ho Re Lee, 9-year-old Pauline, 3-year-old son Philip, and 13 other adults and children who moved throughout the spring and summer.⁵ 13 months later on February 29, 1992, the Kim family of 5 moved into Concord House. Single women members of the planting team lived in the upstairs unit for the first year and then generously (though not happily) moved out in August 1993 to make space for the first 5 Concord House Brothers.

College Ministry in Boston

For the past 30 years, Concord House has been a pillar of the college-centered ministry of Antioch Baptist Church. The Greater Boston area is home to the densest concentration of colleges and universities of any city in the world with 118 institutions of higher education

⁵ This was the first church planting team of dozens that were eventually sent by Berkland Baptist Church over the ensuing decades. For further reference on the team church planting model, see Dr. Paul Kim's D.Min. thesis: Paul Kim, “Developing a Team Approach to Local Church Planting within the University Community in Tokyo, Japan” (D.Min. thesis, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000).

(including 7 Research I institutions)⁶ and more than 153,000 university students⁷ within a city population of only 4.9 million.⁸ It is a cultural capital featuring the likes of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; a sports mecca hosting the Red Sox, Celtics, Patriots, and Bruins; a historical icon as the birthplace of the American Revolution; and home to dozens of leading institutions in healthcare, finance, and technology.

Given the density of universities and students, Boston has been a focal point for campus ministry among churches and parachurches since the earliest beginnings of the Student Volunteer Movement in the late 19th century. Today, virtually every national campus ministry is engaged across multiple campuses in Boston and many churches feature some form of outreach to students. Campus ministries include Cru, InterVarsity, Navigators, Reformed University Fellowship, Chi Alpha, Christian Union, Coalition for Christian Outreach, Asian Baptist Student Koinonia, Sojourn, and Newman to name a few.

And yet, college students in Boston remain a largely unreached people group. According to the 2014 Religious Landscape Study conducted by the Pew Research Center in Figure 1 below, adults in the Greater Boston area self-identify as 57% Christian (including 29% Catholic, 13% Mainline Protestant, 9% Evangelical Protestant), 33% unaffiliated religious “nones,” 10% non-Christian faiths, and 1% “don’t know.”⁹ Compare this to a national breakdown of 70.6% Christian (including 25.4% Evangelical Protestant, 20.8% Catholic, 14.7% Mainline Protestant), 22.8% unaffiliated religious “nones,” 5.9% non-Christian faiths, and 0.6% “don’t know.” In a *Harvard Crimson* survey of the class of 2025, incoming students self-identified as 41.3%

⁶ According to 2020 data published by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Greater Boston area had a population of 4.9 million, ranking as the 11th largest metropolitan area in the United States.

⁷ “Student Housing Report,” City of Boston, Mayor Michelle Wu, 2021.

⁸ According to plexxus.com, the Greater Boston area is home to 118 colleges and universities, ranking 4th among metropolitan areas in the U.S. and by far the highest per capita in the country.

⁹ “Religious Landscape Study,” Pew Research Center, updated June 13, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/>.

unaffiliated religious “nones,”¹⁰ 31.9% Christian (including 16.9% Catholic, 14.5% Protestant of any kind), 14% non-Christian faiths, and 11.3% “other.”¹¹

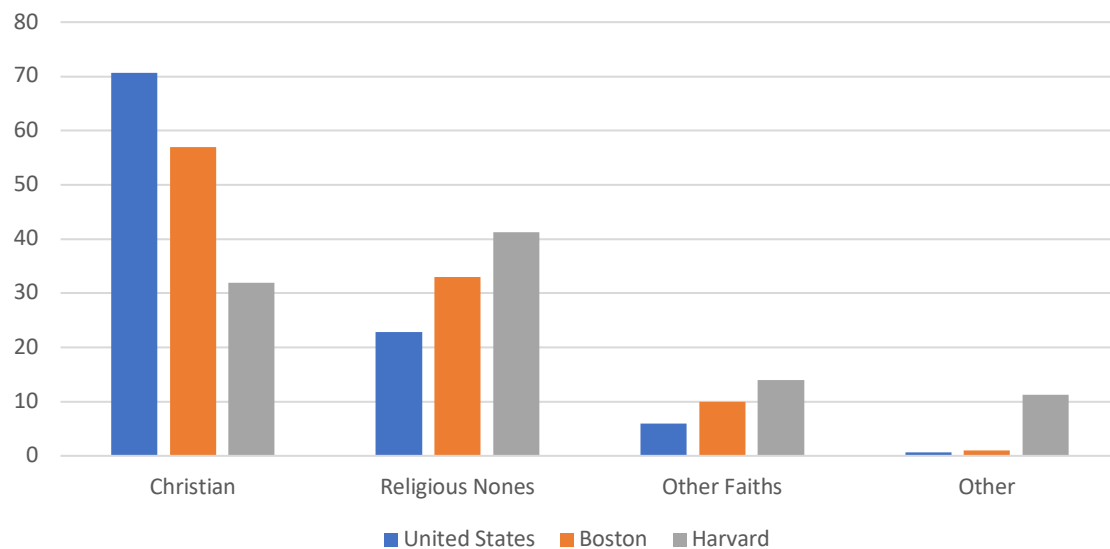


Figure 1. Comparison of religious affiliation in the United States, Boston, and Harvard College. Data from the 2014 Religious Landscape Study by the Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/> and the 2025 “Meet the Class” from *The Harvard Crimson*, <https://features.thecrimson.com/2021/freshman-survey/>.

Student expectations for college have also changed. The university campus experience has become increasingly focused on financial security after graduation. Harvard professor of Classics Richard F. Thomas describes the classic purpose of an undergraduate degree as “prepar[ing] you to live an examined and meaningful life” but Harvard English and Comparative Literature professor James T. Engell observes that many students now regard college as “a stepping stone rather than an end in itself.”¹² Even extracurricular activities, once regarded as means for broadening horizons beyond the demands of the classroom, are now increasingly dominated by pre-professional experiences. According to a student op-ed in the Harvard

¹⁰ For the purpose of comparison, I considered Atheist and Agnostic from *The Harvard Crimson* survey as unaffiliated religious “nones.”

¹¹ “Meet the Class of 2025,” *The Harvard Crimson*, <https://features.thecrimson.com/2021/freshman-survey/>.

¹² Aden Barton, “How Harvard Careerism Killed the Classroom,” *The Harvard Crimson*, April 21, 2023.

Crimson, “extracurricular commitments often transition from service-oriented pursuits in high school to pre-professional clubs at Harvard — probably because the hallmark of success has shifted from gaining admission to a prestigious college to securing a prestigious job.”¹³ Data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program in figure 2 demonstrates the dramatic shift in expectations of the college experience over the past 50 years, away from developing a meaningful life philosophy and toward being well-off financially.

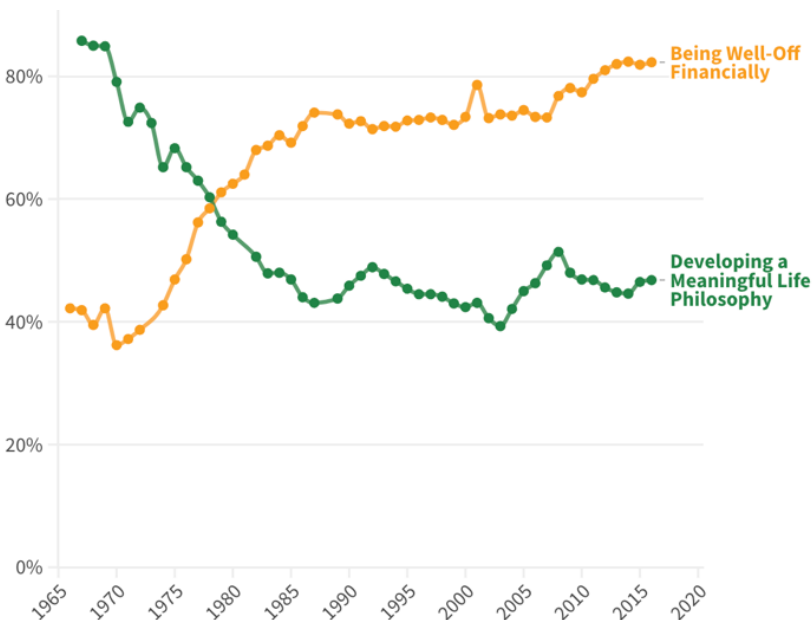


Figure 2. Objectives considered to be “essential” or “very important” by college freshmen.

Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey

The context sketched here in the broadest of brush strokes reveals an evolving university setting in which religious faith and practice appear less and less relevant, fewer students arrive at college with a faith background, securing a financially lucrative job has replaced the search for meaning and purpose, and over-committed student life leaves little space for reflection or contemplation of metaphysical questions.

¹³ Aden Barton, “How Harvard Students Got So Stressed,” *The Harvard Crimson*, November 30, 2023.

Spanning Three Generations

While the context of faith in the university has morphed over the past 30 years, the general attitudes and outlook of students have also changed. In the period from 1993 to the present, three generational cohorts have lived at Concord House – Gen X (my generation), Millennials (Gen Y), and now Gen Z. It is instructive to provide a cursory overview of these generational cohorts as background for examining how Concord House ministry has continued to impact students and young adults across generations even with their distinct characteristics.

In their groundbreaking book *Generations*, Neil Howe and William Strauss identified four recurring “peer personality” types that have cycled through the course of American history.¹⁴ Jean Twenge defines these social generations (as opposed to family generations) as “those born around the same time who experienced roughly the same culture growing up.”¹⁵ Keeping in mind the limits of generalizations about the collective mindset of a generation, such framing is helpful to identify changes in outlook, attitudes, and behaviors between groups and recognize the opportunities and challenges of each generation and their interactions with each other. If Howe and Strauss are right and if Concord House continues to thrive through a fourth generation (Gen Alpha), then it will have disciplined an entire cycle of generational types making chances of even longer-term success quite favorable even as cultural norms shift.

Twenge provides a comprehensive, compelling, data-driven sketch of the three generations who have lived at Concord House – Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z – describing their key characteristics and hypothesizing explanations for trends across generations and notable

¹⁴ Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 8.

¹⁵ Jean M. Twenge, *Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents—and What They Mean for America's Future* (New York, Atria Books, 2023), Kindle Location 41.

shifts between generations. I will highlight a few characteristics and trends for each generation, laying a foundation for later discussion and analysis of Concord House ministry.

Gen X

Gen X, whom Twenge defines as those born between 1965 and 1979, is a generation marked by high self-confidence and self-esteem, taking individualism and feeling good about oneself as givens. They regard themselves as ambitious, determined, and independent, while simultaneously described by older generations as lazy, confused, and unfocused.¹⁶ This conflicting range of traits was born out of a “fast-life” strategy in their childhood years followed by a “slow-life” strategy in their adolescent years and beyond. They developed resilience as children of divorced parents and resourcefulness as latch-key kids (named for the keys they wore on strands around their necks) who returned from school to empty homes. Beginning around 1980, more 12th graders had mothers who worked all or most of the time, than those who had mothers who worked some or none of the time. This trend has persisted through Millennials and Gen Z, but organized afterschool programs – developed in response to this reality – did not become widespread until the 1990s, leaving many Gen Xers at home alone. Despite the fast-life strategy of their younger years, Gen X prolonged adolescence far beyond the boundaries of other generations with extended educations and delayed marriages and children,¹⁷ hence producing the seemingly conflicting traits of independence and confusion.

¹⁶ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Location 2292-93.

¹⁷ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 2309-2312.

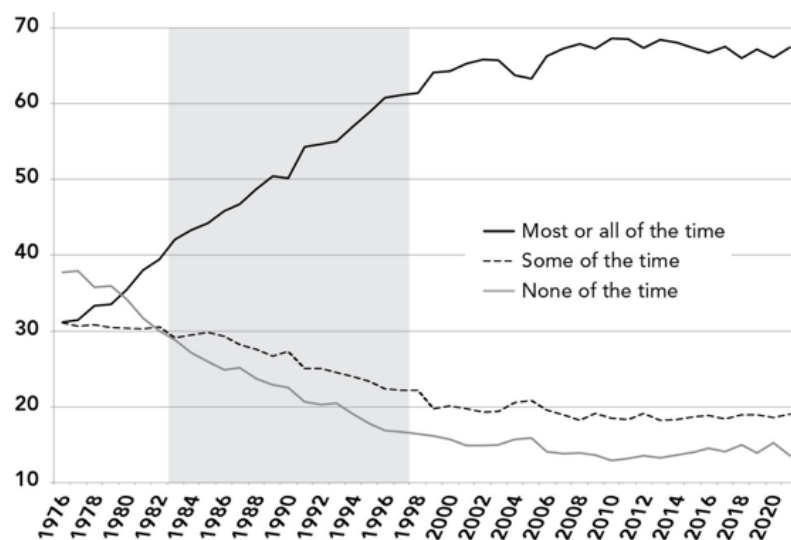


Figure 3. Percent of U.S. 12th graders whose mothers worked most or all, some, or none of the time when they were growing up, 1976-2021.

Source: Monitoring the Future

Notes: Gen X dominates the age group in the shaded years. High school seniors are mostly Boomers 1976-1982, mostly Gen X 1983-1997, mostly Millennial 1998-2012, and mostly Gen Z 2013-2030.

In terms of technological timelines, Gen X has the unique position of straddling the transition from analog to digital and pre-internet to internet.¹⁸ They were the last generation to experience childhood mostly absent of an online component. Their rootedness in the physical world contributed to their resilience in the face of adversity.

Gen X has displayed a striking increase in self-esteem and self-confidence over their Boomer predecessors. Twenge cites a study that found 12% of teens in the early 1950s agreed with the statement “I am an important person” compared with 80% by the late 1980s.¹⁹ The American Freshman Survey found that Gen X college students were increasingly likely to

¹⁸ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Location 2390.

¹⁹ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 2676-2678.

believe they are above average in drive to achieve, leadership, intellectual confidence, and writing ability.

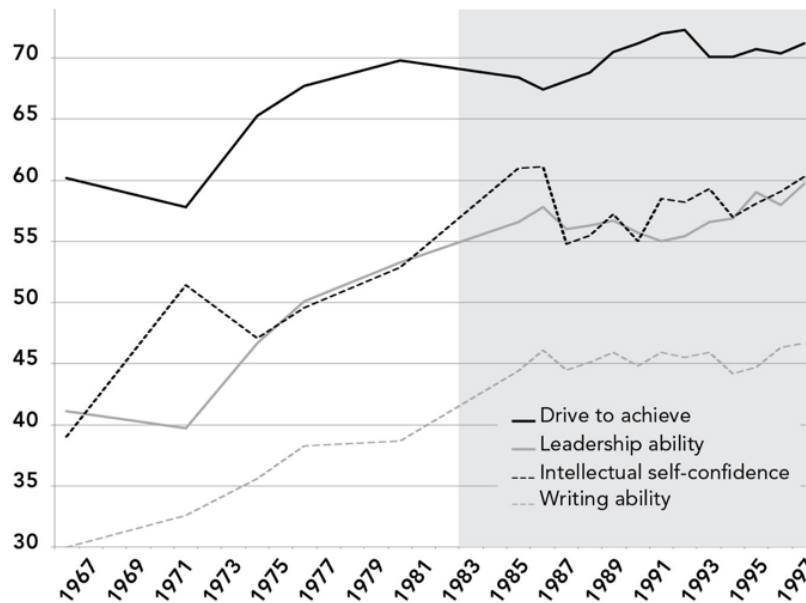


Figure 4. Percent of U.S. incoming college students believing they are above average in certain abilities, 1966-1997.

Source: American Freshman Survey

Notes: Gen X dominates the age group in the shaded years. Entering college students are mostly Boomers 1976-1982, mostly Gen X 1983-1997. Respondents are first-year students at four-year colleges and universities across the U.S.

Most notably, the individualism and resilience of Gen X are accompanied by a trend of declining trust in others across the years of its cohort, a trend that has continued through Millennials and Gen Z.²⁰ This declining trust manifests through cynicism and skepticism of authority. This applies to interpersonal relationships but also to institutions, namely the government and the press. Trust in self became paramount.

²⁰ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 3024-3026.



Figure 5. Percent of U.S. 12th graders expressing trust in others, 1976-2019.

Source: Monitoring the Future

Notes: Gen X dominates the age group in the shaded years. Item wording: “Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?” “Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance or would they try to be fair?” “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful dealing with people?” Sample size was too small in 2020 to be reliable.

Millennials

Twenge defines Millennials as those born between 1980 and 1994.²¹ This generation inherited the individualism and self-confidence of Gen X while hearing from their doting “helicopter” boomer parents that it doesn’t matter what others think of you if only you believe in yourself.²² As a result, Millennials took a “slow-life” approach in both adolescence and adulthood, protected in their family settings and further encouraged by longer lives and more

²¹ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 3499-3500.

²² Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 3623-3626.

education. The average age of marriage for women and men rose from 25 and 27, respectively, to an all-time high of 28 and 30 for Millennials and continues to rise for Gen Z.²³

For the purposes of this study, two key characteristics of Millennials emerge as critical contexts for ministry among this generation. The first is their identity as the first digital natives.²⁴ They came of age alongside the internet, discovering and creating new horizons and possibilities in knowledge, information sharing, entertainment, and relationship building. Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook, is perhaps the most famous – and wealthiest – Millennial, iconic of his generation.

The second characteristic that has proven to be critical context for ministry to Millennials is the dramatic decline in religious participation. While 90% of Gen X high school seniors attended religious services, only 2 out of 3 Millennial incoming college freshmen ever attended religious services.²⁵ And by 2020, Millennials identifying as religiously unaffiliated roughly equaled those identifying as Christian.²⁶

²³ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 4210-4214.

²⁴ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Location 3861.

²⁵ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 4457-4460.

²⁶ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 4472-4474.

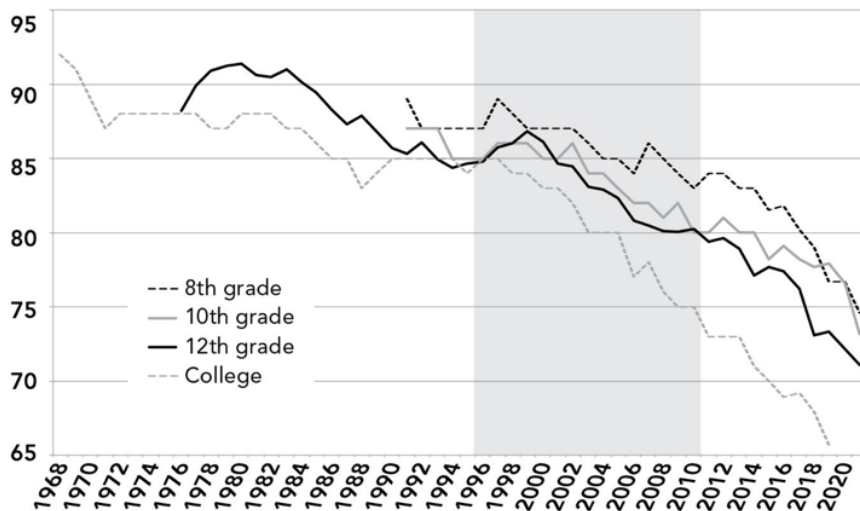


Figure 6. Percent of U.S. teens ever attending religious services, by grade, 1968-2021.

Source: Monitoring the Future, American Freshman Study

Notes: Millennials dominate these age groups in shaded area. College students are incoming college students at four-year universities.

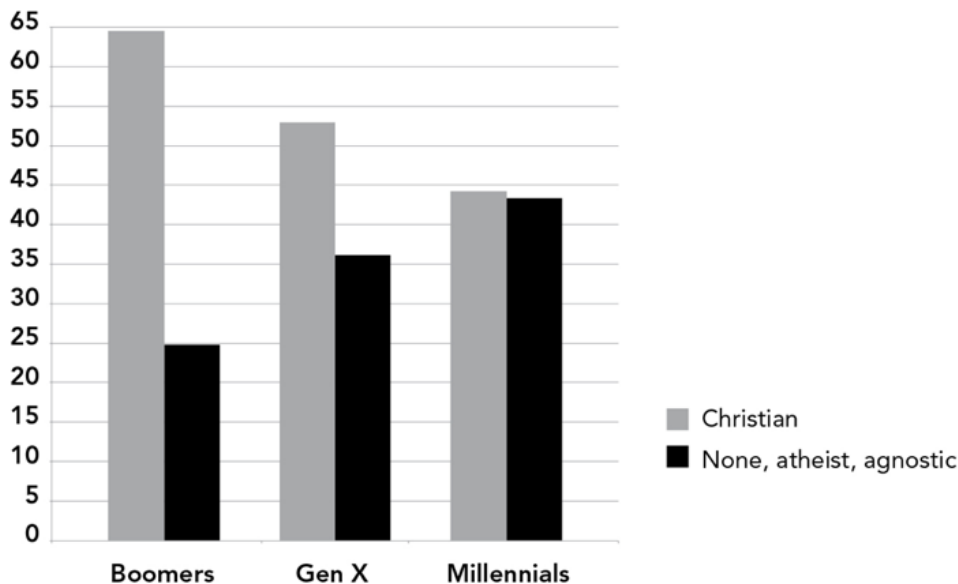


Figure 7. Percent of U.S. adults identifying as Christian vs. non-religious, by generation, 2020.

Source: Cooperative Election Study

In a study of Millennials as teenagers published in 2005, sociologist Christian Smith cautioned against the popular generalization of Millennials as “spiritual but not religious,”

drawing upon substantial data and interviews demonstrating that Millennials continue to participate in religious practice and view religious belief positively, particularly if they grew up seeing such behavior modeled by their parents. Smith does, however, find that religious practice and belief among Millennials differs from earlier generations, most notably in the emergence of a new religious faith dominant among American Millennials, one he terms “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” This new shared American religion is “colonizing many historical religious traditions and, almost without anyone noticing, converting believers in the old faiths to its alternative religious vision of divinely underwritten personal happiness and interpersonal niceness.”²⁷ Perhaps the most challenging structural consequence of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is the failure across generations to distinguish it from more traditional forms of religious belief and practice, creating confusion and tension as a result of differing understandings and expectations within religious institutions and communities.

Keeping Smith’s cautions in mind, the more recent data cited by Twenge indicates that initial trends observed of Millennials as teenagers have only accelerated towards less religious practice and belief. Adolescent Moralistic Therapeutic Deism has matured into more overt dissatisfaction with religion. The core value of Millennials is individualism and individualism conflicts directly with the focus of religion on realities larger than the self and submission to collective rules and ways of life.²⁸ Perhaps the influence of childhood practices and beliefs inherited from parents has waned in the face of core values reinforced by life experience.

Observing Millennials today, the optimism of their younger years has given way to a stark rise in depression as adults. In the mid-2010s, rates of depression among the Millennial age

²⁷ Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Life of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 171.

²⁸ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 4518.

group (represented by the dark solid line, age 26-34) spiked dramatically. And self-reported days of poor mental health soared among the same age group over the same period. Twenge posits four interrelated causes for this undeniable shift: millennials were disappointed by an adulthood that fell short of expectations; the country was coming apart through political polarization; dismantling marriage and religion was not good for happiness; and technology altered the way people judged their lives and socialized with others.²⁹ It remains to be seen how Millennials will develop and adapt in the coming years.

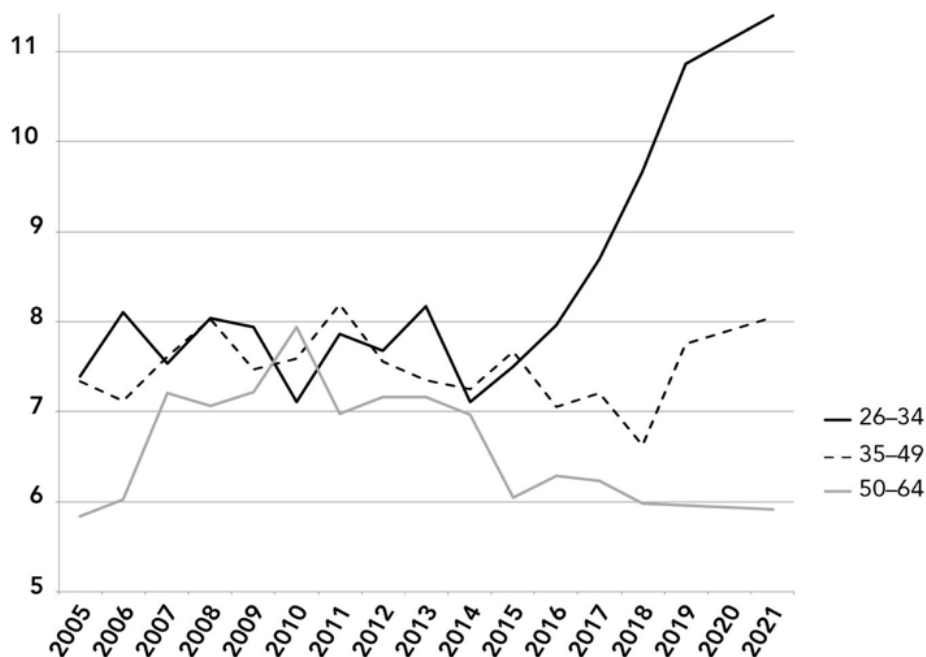


Figure 8. Percent of U.S. adults experiencing major depression in the last year, by age group, 2005-2021.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Notes: Depression is defined as experiencing symptoms consistent with a psychiatric diagnosis of a major depressive episode, which is depression serious enough to require professional treatment. Age is coded in groups rather than in individual years, so trends cannot be grouped precisely by generation. 2020 data not shown.

²⁹ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Location 4968-5066.

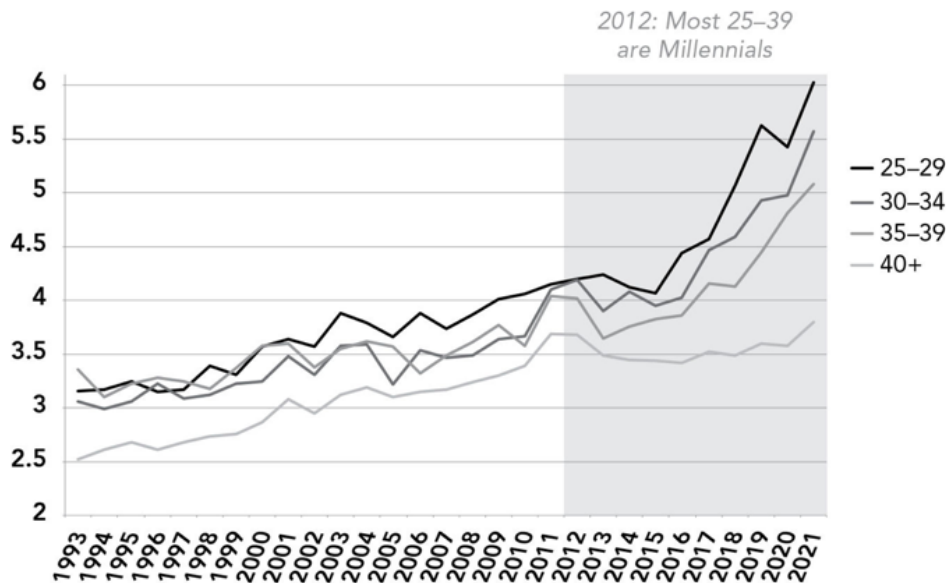


Figure 9. Days of poor mental health among U.S. adults, by age group, 1993-2021.

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Gen Z

The final generational type relevant to this study is Gen Z, born between 1995 and 2012. According to Twenge, “This is Gen Z in a nutshell: concerned with authenticity, confronting free speech issues, pushing the norms of gender, and struggling with mental health.”³⁰ The experience of Gen Z is framed by growing up in the age of the iPhone and the prevalence of social media as a primary context for social interaction. The central traits and concerns of Gen Z listed above either emerged from interaction with technology or were magnified by it.

A few key Gen Z characteristics are worthy of mention for this study. The “slow-life” approach among Gen X and Millennials reaches new heights in Gen Z with longer expected lifespans, higher educational requirements for economic independence, and more attentive parents with fewer children. Gen Zers wait longer to get a driver’s license, drink alcohol, date,

³⁰ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 5165-5166.

and work for pay.³¹ The trend also extends into delayed timelines for marriage and children as Gen Zers seek to establish career success before pursuing a family.

Gen Z values physical and emotional safety on a new scale. They are less likely to take physical risks and more likely to abide by adult boundaries on safety. New norms emerged for Gen Z: free speech is worth limiting if it threatens personal safety; trigger warnings for readings, videos, and events are required to protect the psyche of the unsuspecting from language or depictions that might cause harm; and “safe space” is common terminology, particularly on college campuses.³² Closely related to the value for emotional safety is a startling decline in mental health among Gen Z, marked by a steep rise in general dissatisfaction with life and rates of clinical depression.

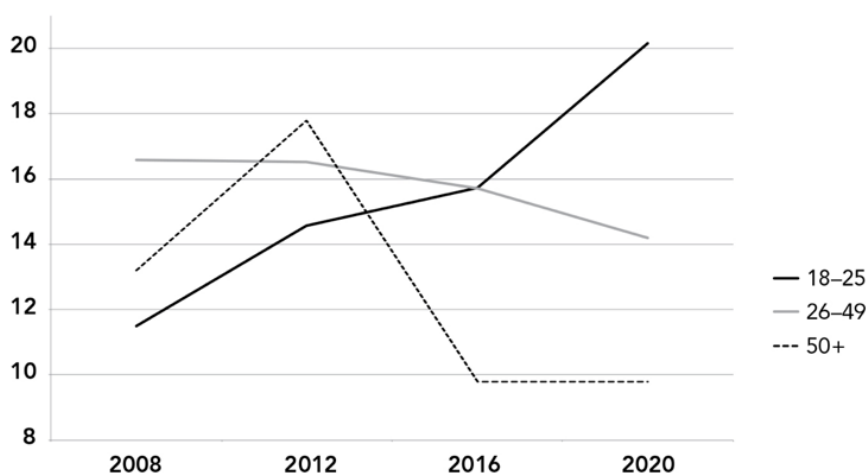


Figure 10. Percent of U.S. adults not satisfied with life, by age group, 2008-2020.

Source: American National Election Studies

³¹ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 5552-5553.

³² Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 5755-5756.

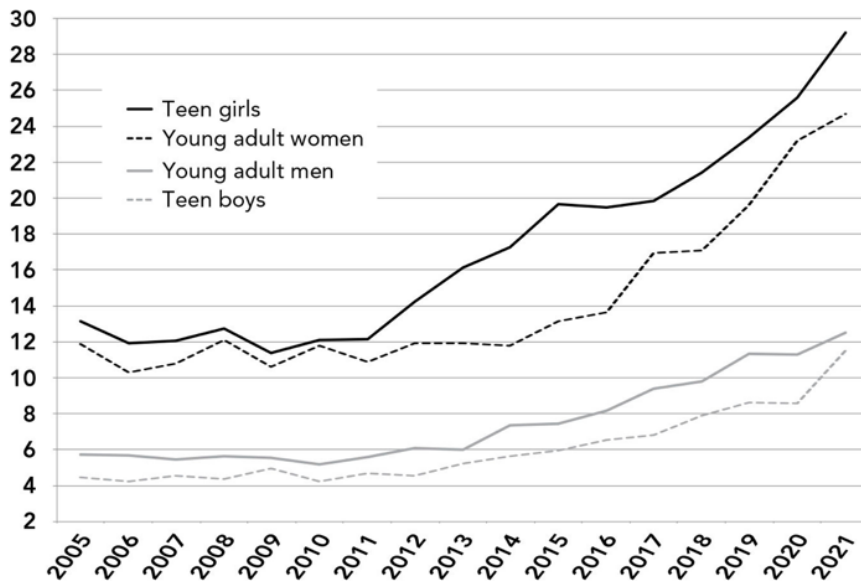


Figure 11. Percent of U.S. teens and young adults with clinical-level depression in the last year, by gender and age group, 2005-2021.

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health

While it appears that Gen Z is more comfortable than prior generations with naming and acknowledging challenges in mental health, the rise in numbers cannot be dismissed as merely a result of openness in verbal expression. A corresponding rise in behaviors associated with depression such as self-harm and suicide attempts has accompanied the rise in self-identification and clinical diagnosis. The data is undeniable: Gen Z is suffering from a genuine mental health crisis.

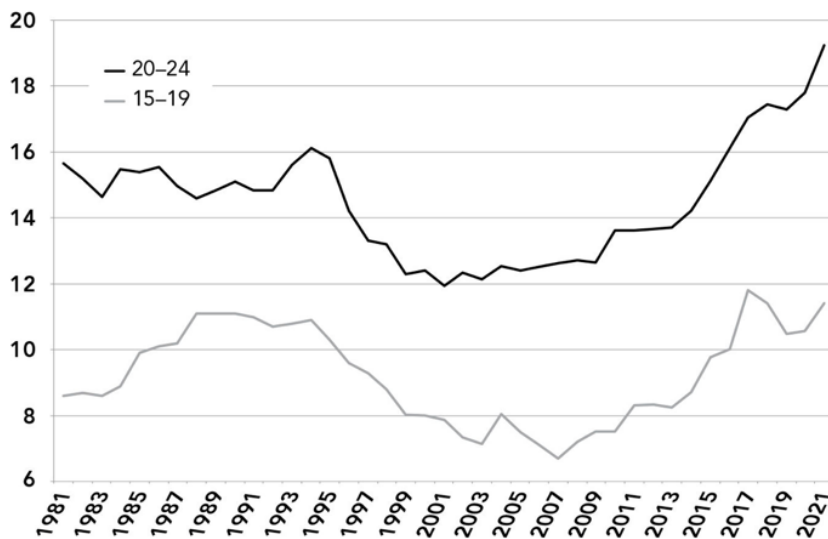


Figure 12. Suicide rate of U.S. teens and young adults, by age group, 1981-2021.

Source: WISQARS, CDC

Notes: Suicide rates are out of 100,000 population. 2021 data are preliminary.

Twenge identifies potential causes of this mental health crisis, many of which are trends originating in prior generations but crystallizing in particularly damaging forms for Gen Z. The most likely culprit is the progression of technology and the internet with the rapid adoption of smartphones and the related rise in social media usage among Gen Z.³³ Looking at the data, 2012 is a turning point year. The first iPhone was released in 2007 and by 2012, more than 50% of Americans owned a smartphone. By 2012, 3 out of 4 teenagers were daily users of social media. And 2012 also marked the beginning of a dramatic increase in the likelihood of teenagers to feel lonely or left out.³⁴ The increased use of technology and digital media platforms impacted not only the emotional, psychological, and social states of teenagers, it waged a physical cost as well. Around the same time period, the number of teens who rarely exercised and the number of

³³ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 5958-5959.

³⁴ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 5850-5853.

teens who did not sleep enough both increased significantly.³⁵ Perhaps most damning of all is the internal research conducted by Meta (parent company to Facebook) which concluded, “Teens blame Instagram for increases in the rates of anxiety and depression among teens. This reaction was unprompted and consistent across all groups.”³⁶ More time online, less time in face-to-face interactions, less sleep, less exercise, and the downward spiral of insecurity driven by scrolling carefully curated online profiles – all of these conspired to drag Gen Z into historic rates of anxiety and depression.

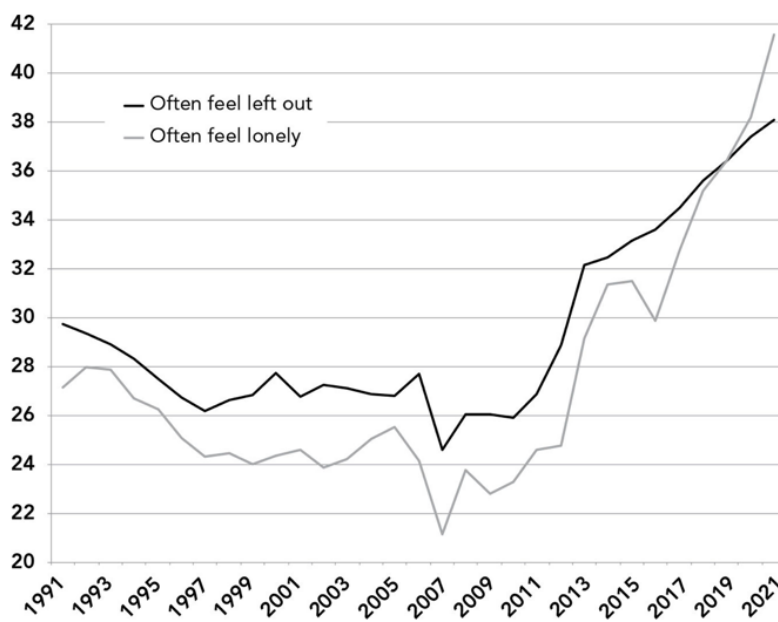


Figure 13. Percent of U.S. 8th, 10th, and 12th graders who feel left out or lonely, 1991-2021.

Source: Monitoring the Future

Notes: 2020 data were collected in February and early March, before schools shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic.

³⁵ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 6185-6189.

³⁶ Quoted in Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 6125-6126.

Conclusion on Generations

To conclude this section on generational characteristics, I draw upon a summarizing observation from Twenge: “Contrary to past theories, the generations did not become who they are by experiencing major events at impressionable ages. Instead, generations differ because technology has radically changed daily life and culture, both directly and via technology’s daughters individualism and a slower life.”³⁷ The twin prongs of individualism and slower life provide two threads to trace across the three generations central to the subject of this study. These threads provide both continuity and distinction as they interact with each generation’s characteristics and intersect with God, his Word, and his people.

Each generation brings a particular angle of engagement with the Gospel. In a compelling application of Strauss-Howe generational theory to the task of communicating the Gospel, James Choung captures the essence of each generation through the lens of its primary spiritual question.³⁸ Gen X asks, “What is real?” Against a backdrop of cynicism and skepticism of authority, Gen X is looking for trustworthy people – authorities with integrity, not just technique. Millennials ask, “What is good?” Viewing life through the lens of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, Millennials seek what is truly good. Adult life has not lived up to its promises, online projections of the “good life” are fluid and unattainable, and the individual self seems unable to affect change. In a nod to their childhood optimism, Millennials still wonder if it is possible that good might emerge out of a community. Gen Zers ask, “What is beautiful?” While life seems dominated by the desire for safety in an age of anxiety, Gen Zers seek what is worthy of their worship – worthy of giving their whole selves freely and without fear.

³⁷ Twenge, *Generations*, Kindle Locations 7658-7660.

³⁸ James Choung, *Real Life: A Christianity Worth Living Out* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), Kindle Locations 539 and 573.

A Shared Challenge for the 21st Century Church

This brief sketch of Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z frames the significant challenge of building and sustaining a consistent discipleship ministry to an ever-evolving university student population in a campus setting increasingly marginalizing spiritual life. Moreover, in a 2022 study of more than 1,000 pastors, “developing leaders and volunteers” was named as the most prominent ministry need (77% identified this as a need).³⁹ How does a church design a university-facing ministry – or any ministry for that matter – that can raise missional leaders and endure the test of time amid changing needs and perspectives? Is the only solution to re-invent ourselves to suit each passing generation?

Coupled with the need to engage each generation in a relevant way is the sobering reality that church participation among American young people has been declining since at least 1980 and has accelerated over the past 15 years (see Chart 5.41, Twenge, above). For all the explosion of resources and models available to the church today, it is clear that the church is facing a growing problem of evangelism and discipleship among young Americans.

This project hopes to discover the principles, models, and practices that have enabled the Concord House Ministry to raise missional leaders within one of the most challenging spiritual contexts in the country. If these principles, models, and practices have endured across three generational cohorts, perhaps they could also endure across ministry contexts and provide transferrable keys to impact young people with the Gospel.

³⁹ Aaron Earls, “U.S. Pastors Identify Their Greatest Needs,” accessed February 12, 2024, <https://research.lifeway.com/2022/01/11/u-s-pastors-identify-their-greatest-needs/>.

Defining Discipleship

As stated earlier, the question driving this thesis-project is this: “How has a house-based discipleship community in Cambridge, MA consistently and effectively trained college students and young adults over the past 30 years to become missional leaders?” Before proceeding further, we should define what we mean by “discipleship.” Simply put, Christian discipleship is the process of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. Then what do we mean by “disciple?” Beginning with the Bible’s definition – in the words of Jesus himself – to be his disciple means you must be committed to observe all his commands (Matt 18:19-20), deny yourself and take up your cross daily and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23), hate your own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters and even your own life (Luke 14:26), renounce all you have (Luke 14:33), love one another (John 13:35), and finally, abide in his word (John 8:31). Jesus’ definition of disciple is absolute and all-encompassing. To be his disciple means we strive to give all that we are for all that He is.

The highest form of discipleship is to follow to the point of becoming like the one we follow. Apostle Paul upholds the standard of Christ for us again and again: “[T]hose whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom 8:29); “[W]e have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16); “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). Apostle Peter and Apostle John also call us to imitate Christ: “Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked” (1 John 2:67); “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (1 Pet 2:21). True discipleship should lead us to become like Christ, living in trust, obedience and surrender to the Father.

Faithful disciples across history who themselves sought to follow Jesus closely provide further insight into the meaning of disciple and discipleship. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in response to the prevailing message of “cheap grace,” preached a message of “costly grace” as the path of true discipleship: “Grace is costly, because it forces people under the yoke of following Jesus Christ; it is grace when Jesus says, ‘My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’”⁴⁰ Ultimately, “discipleship as allegiance to the person of Jesus Christ places the follower under the law of Christ, that is, under the cross.”⁴¹ Dallas Willard defines discipleship as “learning from Jesus to live my life as he would live my life if he were I.”⁴² He expounds further when he writes, “Disciples are those who, seriously intending to become like Jesus from the inside out, systematically and progressively rearrange their affairs to that end, under the guidance of the Word and the Spirit. That is how the disciple lives.”⁴³

These quotes from Bonhoeffer and Willard demonstrate that our understanding of disciple or discipleship tends toward an emphasis on the action and life of a follower of Jesus. We must take up our cross, suffer, submit, live, and die as Jesus did. Yet the Biblical descriptions include both doing as Jesus did and being as Jesus is: we are to abide in Him and be conformed to His image. These two emphases are often separated into discipleship (outward action) and spiritual formation (inward character). David A. Currie helpfully draws together these tensions with a new term “formational discipleship,” defined as “the lifelong, faith-filled process of the Holy Spirit transforming the whole person from fallen malformation into the loving likeness of Christ to the glory of the Father as informed by the whole word of God, in relationship with the whole people

⁴⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 45.

⁴¹ Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 85.

⁴² Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 283.

⁴³ Dallas Willard, “How Does the Disciple Live?” *Radix*, Spring 2009, 34:3.

of God to fulfill the whole mission of God.”⁴⁴ Here we see a more complete vision of becoming like Jesus, beginning with the inner likeness of Christ, moving into relationship with the people of God, and ultimately seeking to accomplish the mission of God in the world.

Currie uses types of bodies of water as an analogy for the differences among these understandings.⁴⁵ He compares our typical use of “formation” to the Dead Sea: water and minerals flow in, but nothing comes out. Our typical use of “discipleship” is like a wadi: heavy rain produces a flowing river that quickly dries up without a lasting source. But a true follower of Christ should be a spring of living water, continuously flowing forth with an eternal source in Jesus.

Currie’s understanding of “formational discipleship” is the most accurate description of the kind of process experienced by the residents of Concord House. In relationship to one another, these brothers have experienced the transformational power of the Holy Spirit informed by the word of God, and then as a community of practice have sought to pursue the mission of God in the world around them. Going forward, we will use the terms “formational discipleship,” “formation” and “discipleship” interchangeably to refer to this inner and outer conformity to the image and likeness of Christ.

A Profile of the Concord House Discipleship Community

Over the 30 years from 1993-2023, an estimated 100 young men have lived as residents in the discipleship community known as Concord House.⁴⁶ Of these 100, 56 are currently part of

⁴⁴David A. Currie, “Shaped by the Word: *Sola Scriptura* for Spiritual Formation” in Gordon L. Isaac and Eckhard Schnabel, eds, *Reformation Celebration: The Significance of Scripture, Grace, Faith, and Christ* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2018), Kindle Locations 1379-1384.

⁴⁵ David A. Currie, interviewed by author, South Hamilton, MA, May 5, 2023.

⁴⁶ This does not include many others who stayed as guests for less than 1 year.

the church network to which Antioch belongs. This project draws on the stories, experiences, and details of these 56 “Concord House Brothers.” A brief demographic profile follows below.

Generations represented

Gen X	17.9%
Millennial	53.6%
Gen Z	28.6%

Concord House Eras

1993-2003	21.4%
2004-2013	30.4%
2014-2023	48.2%

Average years at Antioch (or a sister church) upon entry to Concord House

All residents	8.23
Joined Antioch in college or later ⁴⁷	3.59

Age upon entry to Concord House

Mean age	22.8
Median age	22
Range of age	18-33

Age upon exit from Concord House

Mean age	28.6
Median age	29
Range of age	22-36

Years of tenure at Concord House (among 32 who have moved out)

Mean years	6.12
Median of years	5
Range of years	1 to 16

Ministry department upon entry to Concord House

College ministry	78.6%
Young Adult ministry	16.1%
International Student Ministry	5.4%

Years as a Christian upon entry to Concord House⁴⁸

Mean years	4.33
Median years	3
Range of years	0-13

⁴⁷ This excludes those who attended Antioch (or a sister church) as children with their families.

⁴⁸ Excluding 13 individuals who made a decision for Christ after moving into the house.

Life stage upon entry to Concord House

College student	44.6%
Graduate student	28.6%
Working	26.8%

Ministry role upon entry to Concord House

No formal ministry role	64.3%
Volunteer staff or intern	35.7%

Family ties to Antioch and church network

Pastor or missionary kid	21.4%
Joined as child	5.4%
Joined in college or later	73.2%

Terminal academic degree (including current enrollment)

Ph.D.	35.0%
Master	23.3%
Bachelor	15.0%
J.D.	10.0%
M.B.A.	8.3%
M.Div.	1.7%
M.D.	1.7%
D.Min.	1.7%
D.M.D.	1.7%
Artist Diploma	1.7%

Current ministry role

Volunteer staff	62.5%
Deacon	12.5%
No formal role	12.5%
Pastor	8.9%
Current missionary	3.6%

Missionary/church planter for more than 1 year (at any time)

Missionary/church planter	16.1%
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Reason for leaving Concord House

Marriage	68.8%
Support sister church	25.0%
Job in another city	6.3%
School in another city	3.0%

College major

Engineering / Computer Science	32.1%
Humanities / Social Science	30.4%
Natural Sciences / Math	28.6%
Business / Finance / Communications	7.1%
Arts	1.8%

Job industry (among those currently working full-time)⁴⁹

Tech	24.3%
Research	13.5%
Education (higher)	13.5%
Education (primary/secondary)	10.8%
Business / Finance	10.8%
Art / Music / Design	8.1%
Non-profit	2.7%

Members hold (or are pursuing) degrees from the following universities⁵⁰

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (21 degrees)
Harvard University (19)
Boston College (16)
Boston University (10)
Brandeis University (8)
Tufts University (5)
University of Massachusetts, Boston (5)
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (4)
Yale University (4)
John Hopkins University (3)
Georgetown University (2)
University of Maryland (2)
Brown University
Cambridge University
Carnegie Mellon University
Columbia University
Drexel University
East China Normal University
Gordon College
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Northeastern University
Oxford University
Pomona College
Tsinghua University
University of Alaska, Fairbanks
University of California, Berkeley

⁴⁹ 5 alumni of Concord House are ordained, bi-vocational pastors. They are categorized here according to their non-church-related jobs.

⁵⁰ Individuals with multiple degrees are counted multiple times, once for each degree they hold.

University of California, Los Angeles
University of Chicago
University of Kansas
University of North Carolina
University of Pennsylvania

Concord Houses⁵¹

Concord House 1: established 1992 (purchased by Dr. Paul's sister; brothers entered in 1993)
Concord House 2: established 2003 (purchased by one pastoral couple)
Concord House 3: established 2021 (purchased by one deacon couple)
Concord House 4: established 2022 (purchased by 3 staff couples)

House Leadership

Dr. Paul Kim and Dr. Rebekah Kim

- Spiritual “house parents” of Concord House ministry
- In 1993, Dr. Paul was 45 and Dr. Rebekah was 42
- In 2024, Dr. Paul was 76 and Dr. Rebekah was 73

Every era had a “house manager” overseeing the entire community, and each individual home had a “house leader.” Approximately 10 brothers have served in these roles over the years.

Contextual Considerations

Two contextual realities warrant brief consideration. First is the single-gender focus of Concord House Brothers Ministry. As mentioned above, single women staff lived in the house for the first year and young men have lived there ever since. A conscious decision was made to limit the housing complex to a single gender to reduce the potential for relational complications and distractions common to a co-ed environment. Living in a single-gender community is not meant as a deterrent for marriage but rather to enable focus and simplicity for the process of formational discipleship. Over the years, various living communities for single women have also

⁵¹ Over the years, nearby houses were rented to serve as Concord House 3 until a third house was purchased in 2021.

been formed in nearby neighborhoods and a combination of single and married women staff have provided leadership for those housing groups.

Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah have directed the ministry of Concord House toward young men, aligning with the context of Antioch Baptist Church, her sister churches, and the Southern Baptist Convention in acknowledgment of their collective understanding that the Biblical description of the office of pastor is limited to men. Insofar as the vision of Concord House ministry is to “raise leaders for the 21st century,” the Kims understood that if they were to limit Concord House ministry to one gender – for the sake of effective discipleship as described above – it should be men.

A second contextual consideration pertains to the predominantly Asian-American demographic of Antioch Baptist Church, which consequently extends to Concord House. Over the years, the ethnic demographic of Concord House has mirrored that of Antioch Baptist Church: initially comprised mainly of Korean Americans and now predominantly consisting of Asian Americans, with a majority being Chinese or Taiwanese American. While there have been a handful of non-Asian members throughout the years, it is undeniable that Asian American identity and cultural values have influenced the establishment and evolution of Concord House. Every individual is molded by their particular culture and history and every spiritual community is rooted in a particular blend of cultures and histories. These cultures and histories facilitate the understanding and practice of certain aspects of discipleship in community, while also presenting unique challenges. Ultimately, the construction of a biblically-rooted discipleship community necessitates a collective commitment to seeking the fullest expression of culture and history within the framework of scriptural authority. Concord House has always sought to establish a

biblically-rooted discipleship community, and as such, the model examined in this thesis-project ought to have relevance to churches regardless of historical or cultural context.

A Time for Reflection

Over the past 30 years, Antioch Baptist Church has leaned heavily into the importance and value of Concord House Ministry as a context for discipling future church leadership. As Concord House Ministry celebrates its 30th anniversary, it is an appropriate time to take a step back and reflect upon how and why this “monastery in the city” has proven to be so fruitful and to glean insights that might shape future directions of the ministry.

Reflecting and remembering ought to be a fundamental practice of the people of God. The entire book of Deuteronomy is devoted to the task of reminding Israel to remember their past. “[T]ake care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” (Deut 6:12) Why is remembering so important? Moses warns Israel in Deut 8:17 – “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’” When we forget what God has done, we take the credit for ourselves and we fall into the trap of living as if we were the king of our dominion.

Remembering forges the integrity of our hearts, but it also forms the foundation for future generations. The public, corporate practice of remembering hands down the history of God’s faithfulness and action for his people, enabling each new generation to know the root from which it springs forth. In essence, this project is an act of laying down memorial stones, just as God commanded Joshua when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land: “When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ then you shall

tell them....” (Josh 4:6-7) The testimonies of this project are the stones that will educate our children about the work of God in our midst.

Dr. Rebekah captured the importance of remembering with a phrase she coined: “History humbles you.” Indeed, remembering our history – God’s history – is the key to humility. As much as this thesis-project is a project in history, it is also a project in humility.

Testing the Hypothesis

This is designed to examine how Concord House ministry has produced missional leaders over three generational cohorts and to test whether living-in-community discipleship is an effective model for raising future leaders across generations by fostering Koinonia Cross relationships. The project will involve creating an oral history of Concord House by conducting group interviews among those who lived together at the house. Interview data will be analyzed to discern key elements of resident experiences contributing to attraction, (trans)formation, equipping, mobilization, and commissioning.

A Look Ahead

Chapter 2 will establish a theological and biblical framework for the project, drawing upon the Koinonia Cross model created by Dr. Rebekah Kim and described in her Doctor of Ministry thesis-project: “Raising Future Leaders Through Koinonia Cross Relationships at Frontier Baptist Church in Fairbanks, Alaska.”⁵² I will expound upon this model by examining the “one another” statements in the New Testament; discipleship in Moses, Joshua, and the

⁵² Dr. Rebekah Kim, b. 1951, Goesan, Korea. B.S., Seoul National University; M.Div., Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary; D.Min., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Co-founder of Berkland Baptist Church and Antioch Baptist Church alongside her husband, Rev. Dr. Paul Kim. Founder of Asian Baptist Student Koinonia. Southern Baptist Chaplain at Harvard University.

nation of Israel; David and the Cave of Adullam; the friendship of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; Jesus and the twelve disciples; the first church at Jerusalem; and Paul's ministry to the church at Ephesus.

Chapter 3 is a literature review including an examination of references related to three core areas. The first is Eastern monasticism, including historical motivations for monasticism, Pachomius, Basil, and Cassian. The second is Western monasticism, including Benedict and new forms of monasticism in the Protestant church. And thirdly, we will examine examples of communities of discipleship and mission led by Count Zinzendorf and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Chapter 4 will present the findings and analysis of my focus group interviews. Throughout the interviews, I will seek answers to the following research questions: What are the unique strengths and needs of Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z? How does building Koinonia Cross relationships through communal living and discipleship develop unique strengths and meet needs to enable future leadership? How does living-in-community discipleship effectively build such Koinonia Cross relationships?

Chapter 5 will provide interpretation of my data analysis, examining the role of Koinonia-cross relationships in the fruitfulness of Concord House discipleship ministry across Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z and considering other key factors for fruitfulness that emerged through the focus groups. I will make recommendations about how the ministry model might continue to adapt for future generations.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS: FORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

IN *KOINONIA*

Koinonia: More Than Community

A Brief History and Explication of the Koinonia Cross

I still remember sitting in our church fellowship hall in Cambridge, MA, in October 1994, early in my junior year of college, listening to Dr. Rebekah share her reflections from a church staff retreat a month earlier.¹ While meditating on Luke 5 and Jesus' command to Peter to "put out into the deep," she had sensed the Holy Spirit calling her to set out into "the deep" – a deeper understanding of God's intention and purpose for the church. Dr. Rebekah had long been convicted that relationship to God and relationships between believers are what make the church. 1 John 1:3 reads, "[T]hat which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship (*koinonia*) with us; and indeed our fellowship (*koinonia*) is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." The message of the Gospel, and the message of the church, is an account of what we have seen and heard so that through the redeeming power of the cross others might enter into eternal fellowship with the Father and the Son and thereby enter into eternal fellowship with us as the church. As she meditated on the Word of God, the image of a cross came to her mind, with its four arms representing the different kinds of fellowship (*koinonia*)

¹ Dr. Rebekah provides her own brief account of the staff retreat in September 1994 in Rebekah Kim, "Raising Future Leaders Through Koinonia Cross Relationships at Frontier Baptist Church in Fairbanks, Alaska" (D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2018), 34.

that comprise the life of every believer, and in turn, comprise the life of the church. This is the “Koinonia Cross.”

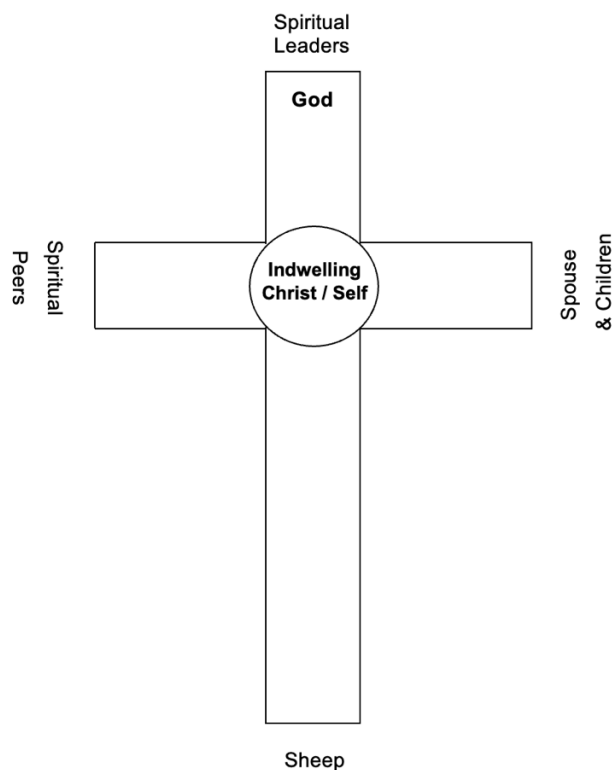


Figure 14. Koinonia Cross diagram

Source: Rebekah Kim, “Raising Future Leaders Through Koinonia Cross Relationships at Frontier Baptist Church in Fairbanks, Alaska” (D.Min. thesis-project, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2018).

The Koinonia Cross diagram above is a visual representation of a believer’s life, centered on the relationships in their life. The following is a brief explication of the Koinonia Cross, developed and taught by Dr. Rebekah at our church over the past 30 years. For a more comprehensive and definitive version, see Chapter 2 of Dr. Rebekah’s Doctor of Ministry thesis-project.² At the heart of the Koinonia Cross is the believer’s fellowship with God, restored through the cross of Jesus. Apostle Paul writes in 2 Cor 5:18a, “All this is from God, who

² Kim, “Raising Future Leaders,” 28-68.

through Christ reconciled us to himself” and in Gal 2:20a, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” Once we are reconciled to God through the cross, we surrender to Jesus and the “indwelling Christ” reigns over our lives. We are called to abide in him and he in us, and when we do, Jesus promises we will bear much fruit (John 15:4-5). That fruitfulness is partially manifested in the human relationships portrayed across the four arms of the Koinonia Cross.

The upper arm of the Koinonia Cross represents the spiritual authority over a believer’s life. The primary authority is God, the Chief Shepherd, followed by the spiritual leaders who are “under-shepherds” (1 Pet 5:2-4), teaching who God is (2 Tim 3:16), and setting an example to imitate as they imitate Jesus (1 Cor 11:1; Heb 13:7). The believer should write the names of the spiritual leaders, shepherds, or mentors in their life above the top arm, in order of intimacy, beginning closest to the cross and proceeding outward.

The left arm of the Koinonia Cross represents the spiritual peers in the believer’s life. These are friendships with other Christians who walk alongside the believer, encouraging and spurring them on, sharing in victories and struggles (Rom 12:15), standing together in hardship (Eccl 4:12), and carrying them to Jesus when they are paralyzed and want to give up (Matt 2:3-5). Again, the believer should write the names of the spiritual peers in their life in order of intimacy, beginning closest to the cross.

The right arm of the Koinonia Cross represents the spouse and children and other physical family in the believer’s life, if applicable. If the believer’s spouse is also a Christian, they ought to love and submit to one another, akin to the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph 5:22-25). If the spouse is not a Christian, then the believer should enclose the spouse’s name within brackets, signifying that the unbelieving spouse cannot participate in

koinonia with God or with the believing spouse. It becomes the mission of the believing spouse to bring the unbelieving spouse into *koinonia* through the cross of Christ, symbolized by removing the brackets from their name once they embrace faith. This principle applies to any children of the believer: while they remain non-believers, their names remain in brackets on the right arm of the cross. Upon becoming believers and entering into *koinonia*, children transition to being represented as sheep, signifying their status as spiritual sons or daughters.

The lower arm of the cross represents the sheep, disciples, or mentees in the believer's life. This is the counterpart of the relationships described in the top arm of the cross. These sheep are guided and protected by the believer in their role as shepherd. They learn who God is and imitate the shepherd to become more like Christ. Every believer should become a shepherd and spiritual leader in the lives of others. This lower arm also includes the non-Christians in relationship with the believer and emphasizes the responsibility of the believer to lead them to Christ.

Once a believer fills out the Koinonia Cross diagram with the relationships in their life, they can proceed to sketch a series of concentric circles connecting the innermost names, followed by the second layer of names, and so forth. This process creates a representation of the believer's life. The innermost circle of relationships and their level of intimacy with the believer provide a spiritual self-portrait, reflecting the believer's spiritual address and values. Dr. Rebekah's subtitle for the Koinonia Cross diagram is "Spiritual Inventory." The completed diagram provides an "inventory" of the quality and quantity of fruit in a believer's life across a spectrum from spiritual abundance to spiritual poverty.³

³ Kim, "Raising Future Leaders," 43.

Sitting in our church fellowship hall and absorbing Dr. Rebekah's insights, I had a transformative experience when I completed the Koinonia Cross diagram for the first time. It provided me with a new perspective on my life—a vantage point I had never considered. Many times over, I had assessed my life based on knowledge, action, behavior, skills, achievements, recognition, and even financial standing (as I filled out my annual financial application for college). As a Christian, I had merely shifted these worldly benchmarks into spiritual terms, such as Bible knowledge, righteous conduct, evangelism prowess, achievements in service of the "glory of God," acknowledgment within the church, and acts of sacrifice. While these could indeed signify a fruitful life, Dr. Rebekah shed light on Jesus' words emphasizing the two greatest commandments: "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). Jesus stressed their significance, stating, "There is no other commandment greater than these," and commended the scribe who confessed that these commandments outweigh all burnt offerings and sacrifices (Mark 12:33). The Koinonia Cross allowed me to reassess my life through the lens of my obedience to these two greatest commandments as reflected in my relationships with the indwelling Christ and with the people God had brought into my life.

It proved to be an enlightening spiritual inventory. My immediate response was a profound sense of gratitude. I had become a Christian only two years prior, and already the Lord had filled my Koinonia Cross with an abundance of spiritual leaders, peers, and even one sheep. Before surrendering my life to Christ, I had no genuine relationships beyond my immediate family. My singular focus on admission to a prestigious college reduced relationships to mere stepping stones on the path toward my goals.

Yet at the same time, I was pierced by Dr. Rebekah's analysis of the types of Koinonia Crosses and the correlated spiritual diagnoses.⁴ A cross featuring solely an upper arm reflects someone likely to be spiritually demanding and draining of leaders, competitive and jealous with colleagues, and unwilling to love others. Conversely, a cross solely comprised of a lower arm signals arrogance and unteachability, a tendency to exert authority over sheep without submitting to any authority. Those with only the left arm might seek comfortable peer relationships without responsibility. On the other hand, a cross featuring only the right arm represents a life revolving around physical family, without any understanding of the church and the relationships restored through the cross. A right-arm cross is not very different from a non-Christian life.

While my Koinonia Cross was somewhat evenly distributed, through Dr. Rebekah's analysis I became aware of problematic tendencies in my approach to each kind of relationship and the factors limiting the depth and commitment of those relationships. The Koinonia Cross enabled me to identify concrete sins and showed me how to bear the fruit of repentance in the context of my relationships. Challenges in my human relationships were almost always a reflection of a problem in my relationship with God. The Koinonia Cross directed me to first examine and restore my love for the indwelling Christ and then to work out my salvation by loving my neighbor as myself.

For those of us living at Concord House when Dr. Rebekah first shared this message, Koinonia Cross immediately provided a clearer direction for our life together and a common lens through which to assess spiritual health and make decisions individually and in the life of the house. To this day, Concord House Brothers conduct the Koinonia Cross spiritual inventory regularly with their spiritual leader and in the context of Koinonia Cross Bible studies which are

⁴ "Koinonia Cross Bible Study," presented by Rebekah Kim, Berkland Baptist Church, Cambridge, MA, October 29, 1994.

given every couple of years. Each brother is introduced to the Koinonia Cross tool at an appropriate point in his spiritual journey and it becomes a regular means of discerning spiritual growth.

Why “Community” Falls Short

At its core, the Koinonia Cross serves as a corrective framework, aiming to reclaim a biblical vision of the church. Anecdotally, in my area of ministry (universities in New England), “community” is the word used most commonly by Christians to describe their churches and congregations. “Community” is perceived as a non-threatening, non-demanding term that implies an inclusive invitation to connect. Its widespread usage in non-religious contexts makes believers comfortable using it in reference to the church especially to those who are outside the church, creating an accessible entry point into the church. The very reasons that make “community” appealing, however, also highlight its shortcomings as a descriptor of the church. By definition, communities share a common interest or identity, but in many contexts that commonality is non-essential and transient. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, a community is defined as “the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality” – as in the Cambridge community, the Harvard community, the Asian community, the scientific community, to name a few examples.⁵ Community can also refer to an online forum, such as the X (formerly known as Twitter) community. In each of these cases, the commonalities drawing individuals together are only one

⁵ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “community (n.),” accessed December 15, 2023, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/community>.

aspect of their identities and an individual can belong to numerous communities of equivalent importance.⁶

The Bible employs a variety of metaphors to illuminate the identity of the church – those who confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in their hearts that God raised him from the dead (Rom. 10:9) and have responded to Jesus’ invitation to deny themselves, take up the cross daily, and follow after him (Luke 9:23). As articulated in the New Testament epistles of Apostle Paul and Apostle Peter, the church can be understood as one body (Rom 12:4) with Christ as the head (Col 1:18); members of the family of God (Eph 2:19); and living stones (1 Pet 2:5) being built into the dwelling place for God (Eph 2:22). Each of these metaphors serves as a lens, bringing the mysterious and profound identity of the church into clearer focus.

A body, a family, and a temple: each depicts a single, unified entity comprised of many parts. Each part is fully and exclusively given to the whole. If any part is removed or in disunity with the whole, the whole is fundamentally broken. And taken in the most straightforward sense, no single part can be unified with multiple bodies, families, or temples. The part cannot conceive of itself independent of its place in the body, family, or temple. These images connote an integral interconnectedness lacking in the term “community.” One can freely move between communities and simultaneously belong to multiple communities. Communities easily grow, contract, and change in character as their members come and go over time. Members of communities maintain an identity distinct from the community. Not so with bodies, families, and buildings.

⁶ English translations of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Life Together* use the word “community” for the German *gemeinschaft*. Bonhoeffer’s text remains one of the inspirations of this thesis and is not considered subject to the critique offered here. For Bonhoeffer, the church is “not a human community (*gemeinschaft*)...[but] rather the faith community created by and founded upon Christ in which Christ is revealed as the δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος, as the new human, or rather, as the new humanity itself.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works 2: Act and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 112. Quoted in Jens Zimmerman, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Christian Humanism* (Oxford: OUP, 2019), 80.)

The Bible's final image of the church is a "Bride, the wife of the Lamb" (Rev 21:9) and the return of Jesus is described as "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev 19:9). Apostle Paul also describes the relationship between Christ and the church through the metaphor of marriage. Following exhortations to wives and husbands regarding submission, love, and unity, Apostle Paul writes, "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (Eph 5:32). Rebekah Kim argues that connecting Christ and the church to the unity of marriage is not merely a literary device of the New Testament authors but instead part of God's intention from the beginning, revealed in the Genesis 2 description of the creation of the first bride, Eve.⁷ In the original Hebrew text of Gen 2:22, the verb used for the creation of Eve is *banah*, most commonly translated as "build" (though the ESV translates it here as "made"). Jesus himself refers to the church – his bride – in the same manner in Matt 16:18: "I will build my church." Kim notes that the same Greek verb *oikodomeo* ("to build") is used in the Septuagint in Gen 2:22 and the Greek New Testament in Matt 16:18, making the connection even more clear. The church is to be unified as one bride with one love for her groom, Jesus Christ. With one heart, the church is to be wholly devoted to keeping herself pure for her future wedding day.

In his high priestly prayer for all believers, Jesus sets the highest standard for the unity of believers in the church: "Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:11b). The church is to be one in the same way that God and Jesus are one, sharing unity in perfect love, obedience, and trust. The unity of the Trinity is more than the unity in our commonplace usage of community.⁸ The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in perfect, eternal, and inseparable oneness.

⁷ Rebekah Kim, "Raising Future Leaders," 33.

⁸ There is a body of theological literature – particularly within the Catholic tradition – which uses "community" as a description of the Trinity. Here, I am referring specifically to the general, non-theological usage of the word "community."

The Meaning of Koinonia

When grappling with commonplace, diluted meanings and connotations, it can be effective to opt for words drawn from the original Biblical languages for their authority, their unfamiliarity in everyday discourse, and a sharpened sense of meaning. A common example is the overused, flattened English word, “love.” The Greek language has four different words to describe different kinds of love, all of which are translated by the single English word “love.” Many have come to use the Greek word *agape* when it is used in the New Testament, pointing to the eternal, unconditional, and sacrificial love of God. Similarly, the Greek *koinonia* demands thought and explication not required by the English word “community” and connotes a sharpened definition of persons in unity with one another. According to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged*, the New Testament usage of *koinonia* means “participation,” “impartation,” or “fellowship.”⁹ *Koinonia* and its cognates are most employed in the writing of the Apostle Paul who uses the term to describe the relationship between Christ and believers and among believers themselves. A quick survey of some of these instances paints a picture of Apostle Paul’s understanding of *koinonia*.

In 1 Cor 1:9, Apostle Paul uses the term to describe the fellowship of the believer with Christ. By the faithfulness of God, we are “called into *koinonia*” with Christ and he will sustain those in *koinonia* with him as guiltless until he is revealed once again at the end. The Apostle John echoes this understanding in 1 John 1:3 – “our *koinonia* is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Our *koinonia* with the Father and the Son is enduring and eternal because he who sustains it will never falter or fail (Isa 40:28.).

⁹ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 448.

One who enters *koinonia* with Christ then participates in the suffering and glory of Christ. In Phil 3:10-11, Apostle Paul writes, "...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share (*koinonian*) his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." When the believer knows Christ and is found in him, he joins Christ by participating in both his suffering and his resurrection. In 1 Pet 4:16-5:1, Apostle Peter describes the elders in the church in the same way – they join Peter in suffering as a "witness of the sufferings of Christ" and a "partaker (*koinonos*) in the glory that is to come." The true *koinonia* of a believer with Christ is marked by the cross in this life and the sure hope of resurrection glory to be realized on the day the Lord comes to take his followers to be with him (1 Thess 4:17).

The characteristics of *koinonia* with Christ extend into the *koinonia* between believers. In 2 Cor 1:5 and 7, Apostle Paul asserts that just as believers share in Christ's sufferings and comfort, they share (*koinonoi*) with one another in those experiences. The suffering and comfort of Christ is the common ground where believers encounter one another, entering into fellowship as they collectively participate in the suffering and glory of Christ. In essence, believers find each other and become bound together at the cross and the empty tomb. This shared bond among believers finds profound expression in the Lord's Supper. In 1 Cor 10:16-17, Apostle Paul writes, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a *koinonia* in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a *koinonia* in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." In and through the suffering of Jesus who gave his blood and body for the church, those who were once many alienated parts are now united with Jesus and made into one body with him and one another.

The “*koinonia* in the Gospel” (Phil 1:5) shared by the Apostle Paul and the church at Philippi is a picture of the depth of the unity among those who share true *koinonia* with Christ and with one another. Apostle Paul thanks God for his brothers and sisters at Philippi “always in every prayer,” and they fill his prayer life “with joy” (Phil 1:4). He holds them “in [his] heart” because they partake (*sugkoinonous*) “both in [his] imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel” (Phil 1:7). They join him in his suffering and in his mission to proclaim and live out the message of the cross and resurrection of Christ. He “yearns” for them “with the affection of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:8) and though he desires to depart this physical life and be united with Christ, he chooses to prioritize remaining with the Philippians for their “progress and joy in the faith” (Phil 2:23-25). They are his “beloved” (Phil 2:12) and his “joy and crown” (Phil 4:1).

Koinonia embodies the sacrificial, interconnected, and enduring unity with Christ and with one another that is the lived expression of the church. The biblical blueprint of church should not be dismissed as an unattainable standard confined to the early church or the end of the age. Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8) and his prayer in John 17 extends to the church of every era, not only to the first Christ followers in the book of Acts.

The Koinonia Cross restores a biblical vision of the church as comprised of individual believers in *koinonia* with Christ and with one another. As each believer possesses an abundant Koinonia Cross, and those Koinonia Crosses intersect with one another forming a thick, dense, interdependent network of relationships bound together in Christ, the resulting reality resembles more a living body or a close-knit family than a mere organization or community. In Concord House Brothers ministry, “family of God” is the title and identity most often used, reinforced by

the terms “house” and “brothers.” A conscious effort is made to explain to new residents that we are “more than a community.”

John Stott provides a threefold vision of *koinonia*: “First, it expresses what we share in together (our common inheritance); second, what we share out together (our common service), and third, what we share with each other (our mutual responsibility).”¹⁰ Building upon this framework and realigning it with John 13:34-35, we can reframe and reorder these elements: The church is the body of believers who have received and recognized the love of Jesus (“as I have loved you” – our identity), who love one another with the same unconditional love (“love one another” – our unity), and who invite others to partake in *koinonia* by exemplifying that love for one another (“all people will know that you are my disciples” – our witness). These are mutually reinforcing, yet they begin first with receiving love from God and extending that love to one another before we can finally invite others to participate.

From its founding, Concord House was intended to embody true *koinonia* among a small, committed group of believers. Through the formation of identity in Christ and unity in love, Concord House ministry has sought to be an opportunity for young people to experience *koinonia* with God and with one another as a foundation for Christian life. And within the *koinonia* at Concord House, missional leaders are trained to embody and testify of the love of Christ to the world.

Formational Discipleship in Koinonia: A Biblical Model

Revisiting David Currie’s definition, formational discipleship is “the lifelong, faith-filled process of the Holy Spirit transforming the whole person from fallen malformation into the

¹⁰ John Stott, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 104-5.

loving likeness of Christ to the glory of the Father as informed by the whole word of God, in relationship with the whole people of God to fulfill the whole mission of God.”¹¹ This process is inherently centered on *koinonia* with Christ and his followers. Beginning with the first couple in Eden and moving through the nation of Israel, Jesus and the Twelve, and the New Testament church, God has worked through the power of the Holy Spirit to re-form his broken image in those who have surrendered to his authority, all within the context of *koinonia* with one another.

Following Jesus Requires One Another

“One another” (ἀλλήλων) appears in ninety-two verses in the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles. The prevalence and content of these “one another” exhortations convey the intricate connection between becoming a disciple of Jesus and relating to others on the same journey. The “one another” statements of the Apostles find their origin in the commands of Jesus. In his “Final Discourse” in the hours before his eventual arrest, Jesus delivers his last will and testament to the Twelve, admonishing them six times regarding their relationship to “one another:” five times to “love one another” (John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17) and once to “wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). As described above, in John 13:34-35, Jesus gives clear definition to the love his disciples should practice for one another; they are to love one another in the same manner in which he loved them. Though the disciples did not yet understand the full extent of Jesus’ love for them, he foreshadowed how he would demonstrate his love when he said, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The Apostle John eventually understood the force of the command to love one another. “If anyone says, ‘I love

¹¹ David A. Currie, “Shaped by the Word: *Sola Scriptura* for Spiritual Formation” in Gordon L. Isaac and Eckhard Schnabel, eds, *Reformation Celebration: The Significance of Scripture, Grace, Faith, and Christ* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2018), Kindle Locations 1379-1384.

God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:20-21). In other words, the two greatest commandments – to love God and to love your neighbor (Matt 22:37-38) – are not two distinct commands but one. This truth lies at the center of the *koinonia* of the church and is the foundation the Koinonia Cross.

Building upon Jesus’ commandment, the “one another” statements in the New Testament epistles flesh out what it means for disciples to love one another as Jesus loved them. Gene A. Getz examines Pauline usage and notes both positive and negative “one another” statements:

A church that is manifesting “the fruit of the Spirit” is practicing the “one another” injunctions that build up the body of Christ and lead to one-mindedness and unity. A church that is reflecting the “acts of the sinful nature” is carnal and is practicing the “one anothers” that keep the church worldly and in a state of disunity.¹²

For Apostle Paul, the command to love dictates how believers should and should not treat one another. The fruits of the Spirit and the acts of the sinful nature – visible in the way believers relate – either build up or destroy the church, fostering true *koinonia* or undermining it. Getz provides a list of these positive and negative usages in the tables below.

Table 1: Positive Usages of “One Another” in Pauline Epistles

Usage	Reference
Members of one another	Rom 12:5
Being devoted to another	Rom 12:10a
Honoring one another	Rom 12:10b
Being of the same mind toward one another	Rom 12:16; 15:5
Loving one another	Rom 13:8; 1Thess 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess 1:3; Heb 10:24; 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 5
Edifying one another	Rom 14:19

¹² Gene A. Getz, *Building Up One Another* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1997), 12.

Table 1 (continued)

Usage	Reference
Accepting one another	Rom 15:7
Instructing one another	Rom 15:14
Greeting one another	Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14
Waiting for one another	1 Cor 11:33
Caring for one another	1 Cor 12:25
Serving one another	Gal 5:13
Carrying one another's burdens	Gal 6:2
Bearing with one another	Eph 4:2; Col 3:13
Being kind to one another	Eph 4:32
Submitting to one another	Eph 5:21; 1 Pet 5:5
Esteeming one another	Phil 2:3
Encouraging one another	1 Thess 4:18; 5:11, 14
Confessing sins to one another	Jas 5:16a
Praying for one another	Jas 5:16b
Offering hospitality to one another	1 Pet 4:9
Fellowshipping with one another	1 John 1:7

Source: Gene A. Getz, *Building Up One Another* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1997), 11.

Table 2: Negative Usages of "One Another" in Pauline Epistles

Usage	Reference
Lusting for one another	Rom 1:27
Judging one another	Rom 14:13
Depriving one another	1 Cor 7:5
Biting one another	Gal 5:15a
Devouring one another	Gal 5:15b
Destroying one another	Gal 5:15c
Provoking one another	Gal 5:26a
Envyng one another	Gal 5:26b
Lying to one another	Col 3:9
Hating one another	Titus 3:3
Slandering one another	Jas 4:11
Grumbling against one another	Jas 5:9

Source: Gene A. Getz, *Building Up One Another* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2011), 10.

Christopher J. H. Wright delves into the Johannine usage of “one another” and contends that John perceives love as evidence: “When Christians love one another, says John, it is evidence of some very important realities: love is evidence of life, evidence of faith, evidence for God, and evidence for Jesus.”¹³ Love serves as evidence of life, as articulated in 1 John 3:14, where believers know they have “passed out of death into life” due to their love for one another.¹⁴ Love also stands as evidence of faith as in 1 John 3:23 where John speaks of a *singular* commandment with two components: the church is to “believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another.” Love further embodies evidence for God. God is unseen, but John asserts, “No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us” (1 John 4:12). Wright suggests “it seems that John is implying that our love for one another makes visible the love of God—which is another way of saying that God himself is seen, since God is love.”¹⁵ Moreover, love is evidence for Jesus, as highlighted by John 13:35: “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” If the followers of Jesus actually love one another in the same way Jesus loved them, that love will stand apart from the world in a brilliant way that points unmistakably to the power and love of Jesus.

As Wright observes, it is no surprise that Apostle Paul lists love as the first of the spiritual fruits in Galatians 5.¹⁶ He echoes Jesus, and John does the same. The “one another” statements from Jesus, Paul, and John all speak to one audience in one context: believers and their relationship to one another within the church. This is the core character of the church and from

¹³ Christopher J. H. Wright, *Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit: Growing in Christlikeness* (Westmont, IL: IVP Books, 2017), 25.

¹⁴ Wright, *Cultivating*, 26.

¹⁵ Wright, *Cultivating*, 33.

¹⁶ Wright, *Cultivating*, 23.

this character emerges the church's love and witness for a world still in death, without faith and without knowledge of God and his Son Jesus Christ.

Formational Discipleship Requires *Koinonia*

Not only does following Jesus require “one another,” but it is through these relationships in the church that God transforms his children into the “loving likeness of Christ.” Those relationships are the chisel in the hands of God, the master sculptor, who painstakingly shapes a masterpiece from a block of marble, much like Michelangelo sculpted the Statue of David.¹⁷ In her thesis-project, Rebekah Kim provides individual biblical examples for each of the four Koinonia Cross relationships.¹⁸ The following is a brief study of biblical examples of Koinonia Cross relationships through which the Holy Spirit advanced the transformational work of formational discipleship.

Formational Discipleship in *Koinonia*: Old Testament

Moses, Joshua, and the Nation of Israel

The period of Israel's history beginning with the Exodus from Egypt and concluding with the entrance into the promised land is a vision of formational discipleship on a grand scale. Through the leadership of Moses, God transformed Israel from an enslaved people into a nation of his own. After setting them free from subjugation to Egypt, he reaffirmed his covenant with Israel, declaring them to be his “treasured possession,” “a kingdom of priests,” and “a holy nation,” and in return, they were to obey his commands (Exod 19:5-6). In the law, he gave

¹⁷ Kim, “Raising Future Leaders,” 126.

¹⁸ See Kim, “Raising Future Leaders,” chapter 2.

concrete direction for how they were to live distinctly as his people, set apart among the nations. As Christopher Wright notes, “Through the Sinai covenant God provided the bonding and moulding institutions and laws by which they were to progress from a mass of freed slaves to an ordered and functioning society.”¹⁹ The process of forming Israel into a nation is a story of God in relationship with his chosen people and their relationship and responsibility to one another. Though God spoke to and worked through individual leaders like Moses and Joshua, the blessings and stipulations of his covenants were always with the people as a whole.

Every aspect of Israelite identity and life was forged and practiced in the context of their nationhood. In Exodus 24, Moses read the Book of the Covenant aloud to the people and together they bound themselves to the Lord, saying, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient” (Exod 24:7b). The teaching, study, and practice of the law was to be constant, public, and communal (Deut 6:7-9; 31:10-13). Worship, celebration, and sacrifice required the participation of the entire assembly (Exod 12, Lev. 23). Sin was confessed and atoned for collectively (Lev 4, 16). On numerous occasions, judgment for sin fell upon the whole nation: three thousand men were killed after the golden calf incident (Exod 32:27-28); Korah’s entire clan and 14,700 others died after Korah’s rebellion (Num 16:49).

From this formational process emerged the next leader for Israel: Joshua. The Torah describes Joshua as the assistant to Moses from his youth (Num 11:28) who ascended Sinai with him to receive the law (Exod 24:13), experienced the golden calf incident at Moses’ side (Exod 32:17), and remained in the Tent of Meeting where God spoke to Moses face to face (Exod 33:11). He received training by being present with Moses, learning from his example, his struggles, and his teaching (Exod 17:14).

¹⁹ Christopher J. H. Wright, “The people of God and the state in the Old Testament,” *Themelios* 16:1 (October 1990): 4.

Joshua was also formed in relationship with others who assisted Moses. In Israel's first battle after crossing the Red Sea, Joshua experienced the power of unity and his need for others to claim victory in battle for God. Moses sent Joshua to lead men on the front lines while Moses stood at the top of the hill with Aaron and Hur lifting his arms in intercession, leading Israel to victory over the Amalekites (Exod 17:8-13). And Joshua learned time and again that trusting and obeying God means trusting and obeying those whom God has placed in authority. He witnessed the consequences of Miriam and Aaron's complaints against Moses (Num 12) and the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num 16). In contrast, Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve spies sent to scout the promised land who returned with a positive report despite the presence of many enemies, even Nephilim: "If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them" (Num 14:8-9). Joshua knew the only enemy Israel need fear was their own rebellious hearts.

After 40 years of formational discipleship under the leadership of Moses and alongside Aaron, Miriam, Caleb, and others, God commissioned Joshua as the successor to Moses, declaring him "a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd" (Num 27:16b-17). To the end of his life, Joshua remained steadfast in his faithfulness to God with an uncompromising leadership over Israel. In a final act before his death, he delivers a challenge and testimony to the nation: "Choose this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh 24:15). As Moses had done before him, he renewed the covenant between God and Israel, recording everything in

the Book of the Law of God, setting a stone under the terebinth as witness to the covenant (Josh 24:27).

In the case of Moses, Joshua, and the nation of Israel, we see God's intention for the study of the Word, worship of God, and dealing with sin to be experienced in *koinonia* among the people of God. In the midst of this life together, God forms disciples who faithfully pass down the covenant with God to future generations. And through the people he is forming, God will fulfill his promise that through Abraham and his seed, "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3).

David and the Cave of Adullam²⁰

In the years between David's anointing as king by the prophet Samuel and his ascension to the throne of Judah and eventually all of Israel, David spent much of his time hiding and fleeing from Saul. In 1 Samuel 22, David escapes to the cave of Adullam, and Psalm 57, written from the cave, gives a glimpse into David's heart. His "soul is in the midst of lions" (57:4) and his enemies have "set a net" and "dug a pit" (57:6) for him, but David sings out, "My heart is steadfast, O God...for your steadfast love is great" (57:7, 10) and "in you my soul takes refuge" (57:1). The Hebrew word *adullam* means "retreat" or "refuge," deriving from the Arabic '*adula*' meaning "to turn aside."²¹ The cave of Adullam is symbolic of the refuge David finds in God himself.

²⁰ The "cave of Adullam" is illustrative of a vision for Concord House and the church, not a definitive type.

²¹ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015), s.v. עָדַל hereafter BDB.

The cave soon becomes a place of refuge for some four hundred other men (1 Sam 22:2). They were men “in distress, in debt, and discontented.”²² The strong and successful had no reason to cast their lot with David. But these four hundred were losers under the reign of King Saul, and as such, longed for the reign of a new king. They had nowhere to turn except to join David in his cave of refuge. David and those gathered with him in the cave are illustrative of Jesus and the church. Charles Spurgeon draws a closer connection between David in the Cave of Adullam and Jesus, going as far as to say, “David in the caverns of Adullam is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ despised and rejected among the sons of men.”²³ During his ministry on earth, though Jesus was the king of all creation, he was rejected and despised by men. He gathered to himself the lepers, the sick, the tax collectors and prostitutes, and uneducated fishermen; those who longed for a new king and a new kingdom. The wealthy and righteous had no need of him. This remains the testimony of the church today. Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian church of their origins: “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards” (1 Cor 1:26). And he says of himself, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor 12:9).

The spiritual dividing line between the strong and the weak is evident from the beginning of human history. Rebekah Kim expounds on this theme in her analysis of Cain and Seth as diverging lineages descending from Adam and Eve.²⁴ After Cain killed Abel, rather than repent and return to God, Cain sought strength and security in the efforts of his own mind and hands, building a walled city in the name of his son and pursuing agriculture, music, and technology

²² David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary*, accessed on January 13, 2024, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-samuel-22/>.

²³ Charles Spurgeon, “Recruits for the King,” *Spurgeon’s Sermons Volume 62: 1916*, accessed on April 15, 2024, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons62.xli.html>.

²⁴ “East Coast Retreat: Message 3,” presented by Rebekah Kim, Camp Jewell, Prock, CT, March 2, 2019.

(Gen 4:17-22). Separated from God, these pursuits led Cain and his descendants to settle in the land of Nod, the land of wandering (Gen 4:16). But Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve, named his son Enosh, meaning “man” and derived from the Hebrew word *anash*, meaning “sick” or “weak.”²⁵ Upon the birth of Enosh, “people began to call upon the name of the LORD” (Gen 4:26). Seth confessed the weakness of his line through the name of his son, and in their weakness they sought out the Lord for strength and refuge.

Thousands of years later, in the cave of Adullam, David, the physical descendant of Seth, gathered around him those who shared in the spiritual lineage of Seth, the line of weakness.

Under David’s leadership, God begins the work of formational discipleship. David Guzik writes,

These men came to David in distress, in debt, and discontented, but they didn’t stay that way. David made them into the kind of men described in 1 Chronicles 12:8: Mighty men of valor, men trained for battle, who could handle the shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as gazelles on the mountains.²⁶

David and his band of four hundred men did not sit and wait passively for the Lord to accomplish his will and fulfill his promise to David. David took responsibility for their lives, training these debtors and transforming them into warriors and victors. In the cave, they learned how to wield a sword and shield, put on armor, fight together as a unit, discipline themselves for battle, and most of all, love, trust, and obey David and one another in *koinonia*. Through training, they became the mighty men with whom David eventually claimed the throne.

In her 2022 “Summer Special Bible Study” series, Dr. Rebekah cast the cave of Adullam as a vision for Antioch Baptist Church, her sister churches, and the ministry of Concord House.²⁷

The church ought to be a gathering place for the weak. All who enter should eventually see and

²⁵ BDB, s.v. עָנָשׁ.

²⁶ Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary*, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-samuel-22/>.

²⁷ “Summer Special Bible Study: Message 7,” presented by Rebekah Kim, MIT, Cambridge, MA, July 15, 2022.

confess their weakness before the Lord, regardless of their standing in the world. Those who are weak then call upon and surrender to the name of the Lord, finding forgiveness, healing, and rest in Jesus and the work of redemption on the cross. Bound to Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit, these new spiritual infants undergo training to be transformed into “giant slayers.”²⁸ Shortly after this Bible study series, Dr. Rebekah gave an alternate name to Concord House Ministry, dubbing it the “Concord Cave of Adullam.”

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah

The testimony of Daniel and his three friends – Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah – is forged in the intense heat of one of the darkest ages in the history of Israel. Daniel 1 tells us that as “youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace” (Dan 1:4), these four were taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonian empire, in 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar immediately subjects them to an acculturation program, designed to assimilate these youths – and the future of their people – into the ways of Babylon. Part of this re-education involved overwhelming their stomachs and their identities with the privilege of eating and drinking the food and wine of the king.

Ostensibly, partaking of the Babylonian king’s food and wine would have meant disobedience to the very dietary laws meant to set Israel apart from all the nations, and Daniel resolves not to forsake his identity for neither fear nor desire. Instead, he requests that he and his three friends be tested for ten days with their own diet of vegetables and water, and then compared with those who eat and drink from the king’s table. After ten days, “the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah”

²⁸ Rebekah Kim coined the term “giant slayers” in reference to 2 Samuel 21:15-22 where David’s mighty men killed the giants remaining in the land.

(Dan 1:19). They trusted the Lord, and the Lord “gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Dan 1:17) and the king “found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom” (Dan 1:20).

While the text does not provide much detail about the backgrounds of these four youths, their courage and faithfulness in the face of great adversity is undoubtedly the fruit of a deep relationship with God and the training received in their upbringing. This first test in Babylon was a continuation of that training. Warren Wiersbe writes, “The Lord used this private test to prepare Daniel and his friends for the public tests they would face in years to come. The best thing about this experience wasn’t that they were delivered from compromise, as wonderful as that was, but that they were developed in character.”²⁹

Daniel is the first to resolve not to take the king’s food or wine, but he then involves his three friends in the trial. Daniel takes leadership over the situation, setting a standard of obedience and faith and drawing his friends into joining him in taking a stand. Yet, in humility, he also depends upon the support and strength of his friends. In his sovereignty, God placed these four together to withstand the pressures of Babylon. They knew they needed one another. Together, they obey in faith and are trained in character, becoming testaments to the power and sovereignty of the God of Israel, embodying the wisdom of Eccl 4:12: “And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

The spiritual character formed throughout their childhood and refined in *koinonia* with one another in Daniel 1 becomes the foundation for the faithfulness of these four friends through

²⁹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute: Determining to Go God's Direction* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2008), 22.

the ensuing chapters, whether they stand alone or together. Regardless of which one of them was on the front lines of spiritual battle, they interceded for one another in prayer, as Daniel requested when Nebuchadnezzar demanded his wise men to make known his dream and its interpretation: “Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery” (Dan 2:17-18). Through the faithfulness of Daniel and his friends, the rulers of their age confessed that their God is the “Most High God,” “the living God,” whose “kingdom shall never be destroyed” (Dan 4:3, 6:26).

Formational Discipleship in *Koinonia*: New Testament

Jesus and the Twelve

Jesus himself, in his earthly ministry, chose twelve men to be his closest followers along with a handful of women who faithfully remained at his side. According to Mark 3:14, Jesus first calls them to “be with him” and secondarily to “send them out to preach.” Over three years of life together, the Twelve heard Jesus’ teaching firsthand and observed Jesus’ life up close. Though the disciples might not have realized it, Jesus was forging a bond not only between each disciple and himself but a bond among themselves with Jesus at the center.

Through the “one another” commands to his disciples described earlier, Jesus was preparing them to be his disciples and his witnesses even after he would depart from the earth. Their love for one another would be their testimony to the world of the transforming power of God to unify selfish, ignorant, and ambitious sinners into the body of Christ. The disciples – individually and as a whole – were corrected and rebuked by Jesus throughout the Gospels for

fear and little faith (Matt 8:26); lacking in understanding (Mark 4:13); hard hearts (Mark 6:52); weak prayers (Mark 9:29); competitiveness and glory-seeking (Matt 18:3, Mark 10:38); being the voice of Satan (Matt 16:23); failing to recognize Jesus' uniqueness (Matt 17:5); denying Jesus (Luke 22:34); and doubting Jesus (John 20:24). Out of this raw material of these unformed men, Jesus laid a foundation with himself as the chief cornerstone for the temple of living stones that would be joined together to grow into the church (Eph 2:20-22).

The First Church in Jerusalem

The depiction of the first church in Jerusalem in Acts 2:42-47 is often upheld as the paradigmatic vision for the church. This church came into being through the coming of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of Apostle Peter at Pentecost. But its character and practices were shaped by the teaching and example of the Apostles who imparted what they learned and lived when they walked with Jesus: teaching the word of God (Mark 6:34, Luke 24:27), practicing *koinonia* (Matt 18:20), sharing meals (Matt 26:26), praying together (Luke 6:12), experiencing fear and awe (Luke 7:16), witnessing miracles (Luke 4:40), and providing for one another's needs (Luke 8:2-3, Mark 6:37). The book of Acts is a record of the work of the Holy Spirit forming new disciples of Jesus through life together in the early church. Day by day God added to their number those who were being saved, fulfilling Jesus' promise that their love for one another would be their witness to the world. Obedience to the great commandment led to the fulfillment of the great commission.

The Church at Ephesus

Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus (ca. 61 AD) and Jesus' rebuke recorded in the book of Revelation (ca. 95 AD) provide insight into the nature and necessity of formational discipleship in the church. The book of Ephesians describes the identity of the church as unity based on the love of Christ. According to Harold W. Hoehner, the frequency of words related to unity and love paints a clear picture of the theme of Ephesians: "unity" is only used twice in the New Testament, both in Ephesians; "one" appears four times; "in Christ," "in whom," "in the Lord" and similar phrases are used 38 times, and 20 of the 108 uses of the verb and nouns forms of "love" by Apostle Paul are in the book of Ephesians.³⁰ Hoehner summarizes Paul's message to the Ephesians in this manner: "Love in action within the community of believers fosters unity."³¹

Paul challenged the Ephesians to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4:1), namely "to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (4:13). That mature manhood is "the unity of the Spirit" (4:3), founded upon "the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (4:4b-6). The church pursues the maturity of unity in the one hope of Jesus Christ through spiritual leaders who equip others to "build up the body of Christ" (4:12) "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love..." (4:2). Paul describes the process as the body "growing up" into the head – who is Jesus Christ (4:15). When the parts of the body speak the truth in love to one another and work together properly, the body builds *itself* up in love (4:16). *This* is the process of discipleship: the church building itself up in love. Unity is the fruit of spiritual maturity. Only by surrendering to

³⁰ Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon*. Cornerstone Biblical Commentary Series, edited by Philip Comfort. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), Kindle Location 890.

³¹ Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," Kindle Location 901.

the one head, Jesus Christ, is it possible for prideful, selfish, and stubborn sinners to remain unified together in love as one body, discipling itself to follow Christ in maturity.

During the summer of 2021, Dr. Rebekah led an intensive study of Ephesians for the residents of Concord House. Over the course of 9 sessions ranging from 4 to 12 hours each and hosted outdoors in the garden patio (during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic), Dr. Rebekah walked verse by verse through the entire book, providing a deep and sweeping overview of the meaning of church as understood by Apostle Paul. Most of the brothers present count those gatherings as their defining spiritual experience of the pandemic.

Kim began by examining the state of the Ephesian church described in Revelation 2.³² The Ephesians were well-taught, knowledgeable, and discerning regarding true and false doctrine (Rev 2:2), and for such they deserved to be commended. And yet, Jesus calls them to repent for “you have abandoned the love you had at first” (Rev 2:4). It is not difficult to imagine that the words of Jesus as recorded by the Apostle John must have compelled the Ephesians to re-read Paul’s letter to them written some 35 years earlier. The same combination of attributes among the Ephesians is addressed by Apostle Paul. In Eph 4:14, he charges the reader not to be “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine” and then in the very next verse says, “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...” (Eph 4:15). As Hoehner notes, “Paul, possibly realizing that the Ephesians were starting to forsake their first love, wrote this letter to encourage them to love both God and their fellow believers more deeply.”³³

Kim drew a connection between the church at Ephesus and the Concord House Brothers. Living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as students and graduates of some of the most elite

³² “Ephesians Bible Study,” presented by Rebekah Kim, Concord House, Cambridge, MA, June 12, 2021.

³³ Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” Kindle Location 911.

universities in the world, were not the Concord Brothers prone to fall into the same trap as the Ephesians, full of knowledge and truth yet devoid of love and unity? Jesus left no ambiguity as to the consequences for the failure to love: “If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent” (Rev 2:5b). Without love and unity, the church is no longer a light that shines in the darkness of the world. The church must not take for granted the calling and opportunity to love God and love one another.

Jesus charges the church at Ephesus for “abandoning” the love they had at first. The language implies intentionally leaving or tossing aside love in favor of knowledge and truth. Knowledge often brings pride (1 Cor 8:1b) leading to the deception that one does not need God or the people of God, producing sin (Prov 21:4) and strife (Prov 13:10). In fact, the pathway of abandoning love, choosing knowledge, becoming proud, and falling into sin and strife can be traced back to Eve who doubted God’s perfect love when tempted by Satan’s offer for the *knowledge* of good and evil. Jesus’ charge to the church of Ephesus is a charge for every church, lest we fall into the same trap.

Conclusion

This section on “formational discipleship in *koinonia*” began with Biblical examples of discipleship in specific relationships and specific contexts. It concluded with Apostle Paul’s vision of church as articulated to the Ephesians. In essence, the examples traced the history of God’s growing revelation of his purpose for his disciples. The final and complete vision of God for each disciple is revealed in the church. In other words, a biblical vision of discipleship can only be formed within a biblical vision of church. Discipleship and ecclesiology are inextricable from one another. To be a disciple is to be a mature, unified part of the body of Christ, fully

surrendered to the head. Forming a disciple and building the church are one and the same. Both church planters and discipleship ministries can only thrive under the full scope of God's vision and calling for his people to be disciples in *koinonia* as the church. In this way, Concord House Brothers ministry could only emerge within a church committed to formational discipleship in *koinonia*, and building Concord House Brothers ministry has built Antioch Baptist Church.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW: FORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP IN *KOINONIA*

OF THE CHURCH

Having outlined a biblical and theological basis for formational discipleship in *koinonia*, this chapter will review a wide body of literature related to the motivations, principles, practices, and outcomes of selected examples of formational discipleship in *koinonia* in practice, beginning with the earliest monastic movements and continuing through to modern day embodiments. Discipleship communities have a long and fruitful heritage in the history of the church and hold transformative promise and power for the ministry of the church today. Concord House Ministry stands on the shoulders of this history, convicted by the same Word and Spirit and inspired by the examples of those who have gone before.

This literature review will serve three primary purposes in the arc of this thesis-project. First, examination of motivations and context in the formation of communities of discipleship will provide an opportunity to understand their impact on the vision and shape of these communities.

- Identify the characteristics common to discipleship communities across the history of the church as a standard of comparison for Concord House.
- Survey the practices that enabled the transformative process of formational discipleship as an opportunity to affirm, reconsider, and expand the practices at Concord House.
- Examine the motivations and visions that animate discipleship communities and how those motivations and visions produced distinctives among these communities. These

lessons will provide a backdrop against which to understand the vision, development, and future of Concord House.

Eastern Monasticism

Antony and the Desert Fathers

We begin with communities of discipleship formed by monastics. Among the earliest accounts of a monastic way of life is *Life of Antony*, a fourth-century biography written by Athanasius of Alexandria chronicling the journey of Antony (251-356), an Egyptian hermit often credited as the “Father of All Monks” and the “Father of Monasticism.” According to Athanasius, at age 18 or 20, Antony was reflecting on how the disciples left everything to follow Jesus (Matt 4:20) and how those in the first church sold everything to give to those in need (Acts 4:35) when he entered a church and the passage read aloud that day was Jesus’ command to the rich young ruler in Matt 19:21 – “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”¹ Antony, regarding this as a direct charge to him from God, immediately sold everything he had and began an ascetic lifestyle. Though Antony, like other ascetics of his time, began his new life in the company and setting of his family and community, after fifteen years, he became the first to withdraw into increasingly distant and isolated places to combat Satan and sin and enter greater dependence with God. After 20 years in isolation, at the pleas of many who came to learn from and imitate him, Antony began to teach and guide those who sought his counsel. He exhorted them to respond to the love of God who did not spare his own son (Rom 8:32) by taking up a solitary life, “...and thus it

¹ Athanasius of Alexandria, *Life of St. Anthony* 2, H. Ellershaw, trans., Kevin Knight, ed., accessed January 22, 2023, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2811.htm>.

happened in the end that cells arose even in the mountains, and the desert was colonised by monks.”² “[B]y frequent conversation he increased the eagerness of those already monks, stirred up in most of the rest the love of the discipline, and speedily by the attraction of his words cells multiplied, and he directed them all as a father.”³

Alongside *Life of Antony*, the collected *Sayings of the Fathers* provides another primary account of the wisdom and perspectives of the earliest, mostly Egyptian, desert monastics. Originally passed down through oral tradition, the oldest manuscript dates to the late 4th century. The sayings take the form of wisdom given from an Abba (a spiritual leader or father) to a seeker in a specific context, unsystematic and occasional in nature. They are “records of practical advice given out of a long life of experience in monastic and ascetic discipline.”⁴ Gatherings formed when these desert monastic pioneers drew individual followers desiring to learn how to follow Jesus more faithfully, but they fell short of forming intentional communities.

Greg Peters observes an important commonality in *Life of Antony* and *Sayings of the Fathers*: “In both...we see that the eremitical life was one of withdrawal into one’s cell (both real and figurative) for the purpose of returning to the world to give guidance and direction to those seeking it.”⁵ Withdrawal was not an escape or a permanent separation. From these early beginnings, the first monks were marked by a desire to combat sin and be purified and a corresponding desire to emerge and give to others. This produced a repeated pattern of withdrawal and return, “to be able to focus all of one’s love on God so that one could then return to the world and love one’s neighbor properly.”⁶

² Athanasius of Alexandria, *Life of St. Anthony* 14.

³ Athanasius of Alexandria, *Life of St. Anthony* 15.

⁴ Benedicta Ward, “Foreword,” in *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1975), xx.

⁵ Greg Peters, *The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 44.

⁶ Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 39.

The pattern of withdrawal to re-engage has been central to Concord House Ministry from the start. The first group of brothers moved in together with a vision to be strengthened by one another so that we could each live more powerfully as a witness on our respective college campuses. That spirit continues today as brothers move back and forth between Concord House and their campuses or workplaces, setting out each morning with the mentality of a missionary.

The Beginnings of Communal Monasticism

Pachomius, a 4th-century younger Coptic contemporary of Antony, is often credited as the founder of cenobitic (communal) monasticism. “Cenobite” comes from the Greek *koinos* (common) and *bios* (life). Though communal monasticism certainly pre-dated Pachomius, he is responsible for organizing and popularizing monastic communities on a wholly different scale. According to his biography *First Greek Life*, while living as a hermit, Pachomius received a call from God to build a monastery and take on disciples. As disciples began to arrive, Pachomius first tested their commitment to renounce all to follow Christ, then “acted as servant, handling the cooking, answering the door, caring for the sick, and reportedly would send the neophytes off to pray.”⁷ As his selfless service drew a community around him, he established a set of rules that governed entrance to the monastery, labor requirements, material possessions, and a daily schedule.⁸ Pachomius founded numerous sizeable communities, including ones for women, with as many as 7,000 members in a single location. Constant memorization and recitation of scripture alongside communal prayer and liturgy disciplined the monk (or nun) to practice single-minded devotion to God. New members of the community were expected to memorize twenty

⁷ William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 120.

⁸ Stephen J. Davis, *Monasticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), Kindle Edition, 23.

psalms or two epistles as a foundation for a life of meditation.⁹ Pachomius eventually instituted organization across a federation of nine monasteries which he named *Koinonia*, establishing unity under a single head and sharing the same rule and schedule, setting them apart from general society and even from other monastic models.¹⁰

A contemporary of Pachomius, Basil the Great, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, (modern-day Turkey) is responsible for the development and spread of cenobitic monasteries across Asia Minor. Basil traveled to Palestine, Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia to learn from the lives of other monastics and was influenced by Pachomian monasteries in the formation of his own monastic principles, most fully represented in his *Great Asceticon* comprised of 313 “Short Rules” and 55 “Long Rules.”¹¹ In Long Rule 7, Basil provides eight reasons for the preference of community over solitary life, making a compelling case for the value of community in the effort to live a life that pleases and glorifies God.¹² First, by God’s design, every human being needs other human beings, like a foot needs the rest of the body. Second, the command to love one another requires us to be concerned with the needs of others, not just our own. Third, we need others to point out our sins in love, for we are not able to see defects in ourselves. Fourth, many commandments require the other in order to obey, such as feeding the hungry. Fifth, we are called to be one body under our head Jesus Christ, rejoicing and suffering with one another. We cannot be so unless we are together. Sixth, no one person receives all the gifts of the Spirit. We need one another to properly exercise and develop our gifts in service to each other. Seventh, we need the rebuke of others to ward off sin and self-satisfaction. And eighth, Christian virtues like

⁹ Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 46-7.

¹⁰ Davis, *Monasticism*, 23.

¹¹ Saint Basil, *Ascetical Works*, Sr. M. Monica Wagner, trans., *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 1962), viii.

¹² Basil, *Ascetical Works*, 248-52.

humility, longsuffering, and unity can only be formed in the context of relationships. In summary, Basil refers to Ps 133:1 – “So it is an arena for the combat, a good path of progress, continual discipline, and a practicing of the Lord's commandments, when brethren dwell together in community.”¹³

Unlike Pachomius and other local monastic movements, Basil sought to establish monastic communities within the ministry of the local church, in an urban setting. “His goal was to balance the individualism and personal holiness of the desert monks with Jesus’ call to engage the world with acts of justice and mercy.”¹⁴ Basil viewed love of neighbor not only within the confines of the monastery but extending into the surrounding community.

Because of the paramount obligation of charity toward one's fellow man, Basilian coenobia are established in towns instead of in desert wastes. The monks dwell in the midst of their secular brethren so as by their conduct to provide them with a model for true Christian living. The external works of the monastic life are to be undertaken not only as corporal discipline but from the love of neighbor....¹⁵

In an act of service to his community, Basil built one of the world’s first hospitals to provide medical care for those who could not afford it, as well as train medical students and host weary travelers. Basil’s monasteries opened the possibility of living a life of whole devotion to Christ while in the midst of the city, a tradition that continued through the line of urban monasteries in later centuries.

Monastic communities arose earliest in Egypt and the Eastern Roman Empire and one figure more than any other is responsible for transferring the eastern model to the west: John Cassian. A late 4th and early 5th-century monk, Cassian was living as a monk in Bethlehem when

¹³ Basil, *Ascetical Works*, 252.

¹⁴ Alden Bass, “The Way: Two Millennia of Christian Community,” in *Called to Community: The Life Jesus Wants for His People*, ed. Charles E. Moore (Walden, NY: Plough Publishing House, 2016), Kindle Edition, 66.

¹⁵ Basil, *Ascetical Works*, xi.

he came across an old monk from Egypt whose tales so intrigued him that Cassian traveled to Egypt to learn more. Over a period of 15 years, Cassian lived among Egyptian monastics, and from these experiences he later founded two monasteries in southern Gaul (present-day France) and wrote two seminal Latin works – *The Institutes* and *The Conferences* – providing guidance for the everyday life and spiritual formation of monks. “By developing a system of monastic theology, Cassian bequeaths the spirituality of Antony, the desert fathers and mothers, and Pachomius to future generations, perennially connecting all of monastic history to the great flourishing of monasticism in the fourth-century deserts of Egypt.”¹⁶

In *Conference* 18, Cassian describes 3 different kinds of monks – Cenobites, Anchorites (hermits), and Sarabaites. While Cassian himself experienced and honored the life of both the Cenobite and the Anchorite, he warns against the detestable Sarabaites whom he describes as first appearing in the lives of Ananias and Sapphira and later re-emerging among the monks of Egypt. These were monks who sought to mimic the form of spiritual perfection, motivated by the praise of men. They “shirk the severity of the monastery, and live two or three together in their cells, not satisfied to be under the charge and rule of an Abbot, but arranging chiefly for this; viz., that they may get rid of the yoke of the Elders and have liberty to carry out their wishes and go and wander where they will, and do what they like....”¹⁷ Here we catch a glimpse of the importance of communal life in the formational discipleship of a monk. While the most mature and spiritual monk might pursue the solitary life of an anchorite, most monks needed the community, a rule, and an abbot, lest they live free of any spiritual authority, dictated by their desires and whims.

¹⁶ Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 50.

¹⁷ John Cassian, “Conference 18,” in *Conferences*, C.S. Gibson, trans. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894), accessed January 23, 2024, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3508.htm>.

Like those who gathered around David in the Cave of Adullam, those who choose to move into Concord House often move in with a sense of need, whether it be physical or spiritual, otherwise, they would choose a more convenient living arrangement. That need brings them into the community with a disposition of humility. Over time, if awareness of spiritual need deepens, it leads to surrender to the Lord, commitment to the community, and transformation. If the sense of spiritual need decreases over time, it often leads to departing from the house and pursuing a different lifestyle. There are certainly other, legitimate reasons to depart from the house, but those who leave the house because they believe they can stand alone often face spiritual struggle.

Western Monasticism

Benedict of Nursia

This brings us to the Western monastic tradition and its father, Benedict of Nursia. Benedict (c. 480-543/7) was born into a wealthy family in central Italy after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476. According to his biography by Gregory the Great, when Benedict came of age he went to Rome to continue his education and upon seeing the detestable pagan lives of his fellow students, he decided to depart from his studies and seek another form of life, withdrawing to a desert cave where he lived in solitude for 3 years with his basic needs cared for by a monk named Romanus.¹⁸ Eventually, he was sought out as a spiritual leader and began to guide various monasteries, later founding his own at Monte Cassino for which he wrote his Rule.¹⁹

¹⁸ Saint Gregory the Great, *Life of Saint Benedict*, Dom. Edmund Martane, trans. (1638), Chapter 1, accessed January 23, 2024, https://ccel.org/ccel/gregory/life_rule/life_rule.ii.ii.html.

¹⁹ Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 73.

Over the course of the following centuries, the Rule of St. Benedict and those who chose to follow it became the dominant form of monasticism across the West. Rod Dreher points to the Benedictine monastery as the key to preserving and reseeding spiritual, intellectual, and cultural vitality in the wake of the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire.

These monasteries kept faith and learning alive within their walls, evangelized barbarian peoples, and taught them how to pray, to read, to plant crops, and to build things. Over the next few centuries, they prepared the devastated societies of post-Roman Europe for the rebirth of civilization. It all grew from the mustard seed of faith planted by a faithful young Italian who wanted nothing more than to seek and to serve God in a community of faith constructed to withstand the chaos and decadence all around them. Benedict's example gives us hope today, because it reveals what a small cohort of believers who respond creatively to the challenges of their own time and place can accomplish by channeling the grace that flows through them from their radical openness to God, and embodying that grace in a distinct way of life.²⁰

Dreher's understanding and appropriation of the role of Benedictine monasteries harkens back to the earliest motivations of Antony and the Desert Fathers in retreating from the world to cultivate a spiritual wealth from which to re-enter and give back to the world. "If we are going to be for the world as Christ meant for us to be, we are going to have to spend more time away from the world, in deep prayer and substantial spiritual training – just as Jesus retreated to the desert to pray before ministering to the people. We cannot give the world what we do not have."²¹ In this way, monasticism and Benedictine history in particular serve as a model for Christian engagement in a world increasingly hostile and counter to the beliefs and practices of those who follow Christ. We withdraw so that we might return to love our neighbor more fully.

²⁰ Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Sentinel, 2017), Kindle Edition, 15-6.

²¹ Dreher, *The Benedict Option*, Kindle Edition, 19.

The Rule of Saint Benedict

Why did Benedict's communities attract such a following and what positioned them to give so richly to the world? The first place to look is the Rule of St. Benedict. A relatively straightforward text of 73 short chapters, Benedict's Rule has endured for more than 15 centuries and continues to inspire readers from all walks of life. A few key themes emerge with relevance for this project.

The foundation of the Rule is love. Benedict writes, "This is advice from a father who loves you" (Prologue 1).²² The "little strictness" of the Rule is to "amend faults and safeguard love" (Prologue 47).²³ For the Lord is waiting for each of us to repent and commit to a life of obedience, as "...indeed the Lord assures us in his love: *I do not wish the death of the sinner, but that he turn back to me and live* (Ezek 33:11)" (Prologue 38).²⁴ Not only is Benedict motivated by love, but as the follower learns to "run on the path of God's commandments, [his] heart [will overflow] with the inexpressible delight of love" (Prologue 49).²⁵

Like Cassian, Benedict outlines different kinds of monastic life, with the unmistakable message that any genuine, serious seeker of God – apart from the most mature – should pursue the way of the cenobite, living in community with other monks, under the authority of a rule and an abbot. Joan Chittester expands upon the importance of community for Benedict: "The cenobite...works out the way to God by walking with others. In monastic spirituality, there is no escape from life, only a chance to confront it, day after day in all its sanctifying tedium and blessed boredom and glorious agitation in the communities of which we are a part...."²⁶ Our love

²² Saint Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict in English*, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), 15.

²³ Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 19.

²⁴ Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 18.

²⁵ Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 19.

²⁶ Joan Chittester, *The Rule of Saint Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21st Century* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2016), Kindle Edition, 46.

for and obedience to God is worked out in the context of our relationships to one another. The sarabaites or the gyrovagues (wanderers) who avoid accountability to community ultimately avoid accountability to God. Herein lies the basis of the Benedictine vow of stability – the commitment to a single monastery community for life. There is no option to avoid difficulty with another person. You must work through the challenge to remain in community. Rather than limiting or constraining, the vow of stability produces freedom. “To have to work it out is to demand growth, as painful as it is, and that is freeing. Faithfulness is a limit that forces us to stop running and encounter God, self, and other right now, right here.”²⁷

After describing the types of monks, Benedict turns to the role and qualifications of the abbot or prioress, the leader of the community. Leadership in the monastery is not like leadership in the Roman world: the abbot is to lead like Christ and with the teachings of Christ. He is held to the highest standard by the Lord and should lead by example more than by words. The abbot is in a fearful position before the Lord: “The abbot must, therefore, be aware that the shepherd will bear the blame wherever the father of the household finds that the sheep have yielded no profit” (2:7).²⁸ Benedict’s words remind us of James 3:1, which reads, “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” The leader is a shepherd who takes on the difficult and demanding responsibility of guiding his flock away from destruction and toward life eternal, not only protecting this flock but growing it by drawing others in. The abbot must exercise wisdom and discernment to “accommodate and adapt himself to each one’s character and intelligence,” “directing souls and serving a variety of temperaments, coaxing, reproofing and encouraging them as appropriate”

²⁷ Brian C. Taylor, *Spirituality for Everyday Living: An Adaptation of the Rule of St. Benedict* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1989), 17. Quoted in Ned Lunn, “On Discipleship within the Monastic Tradition,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.nedlunn.com/2017/06/05/on-discipleship-within-the-monastic-tradition/>.

²⁸ Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 22.

(2:31-32).²⁹ The abbot's devotion for, knowledge of, and surrender to Christ must be mature enough to provide space for his followers to grow.

Having established the role of the abbot, we turn to the vow of obedience. The "labor of obedience" appears in the second line of the Rule and continues as a steady theme throughout the text. Obedience is a critical step in the pathway to humility and is to be carried out for the love of God in imitation of Jesus who obeyed to the point of death on a cross (7.24). Obedience is required even in unjust conditions. According to Peters, "The most trying crucible of obedience in the RB is a monk's unquestioning obedience to his abbot."³⁰ The monk is to "carry out the superior's order as promptly as if the command came from God himself" (5.4).³¹ For Benedict, such obedience is motivated by love for eternal life (5.10) and made possible by surrendering one's judgment to the decision and direction of the abbot as Jesus surrendered himself to the direction of God (5.12). Obedience begins with listening in silence to discern what the Lord commands, in part through obedience to the abbot.

Fr. Columba Cary-Elwes notes the meaning of the Latin root for "obedience" in his commentary on the Rule: "If you unpack it, *ob audiere*, to listen intently, is the language of love. When you really love, you listen intently to know what the one you love wants to happen."³² For the Benedictine, obedience, listening, silence, and love are intricately intertwined in the pursuit of whole-hearted devotion to God. Rowan Williams draws the connection between this intricate web and discipleship: "Being a disciple, a learner...is a state of being in which you are looking and listening without interruption.... You are hanging around; you are watching; you are

²⁹ Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 24.

³⁰ Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 79.

³¹ Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 29.

³² Columba Cary-Elwes, *Work and Prayer: The Rule of St. Benedict for Lay People* (London: Burns & Oates, 1992), 182. Quoted in Ned Lunn, "On Discipleship within the Monastic Tradition," accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.nedlunn.com/2017/06/05/on-discipleship-within-the-monastic-tradition/>.

absorbing a way of being that you are starting to share. You learn by sharing life; you learn by looking and listening.”³³ That attentiveness is not an end in and of itself. “It is also a willingness to bring an active and transfiguring love into this situation of expectancy, to keep company so that an action and a relationship may come into being.”³⁴ In other words, our stillness and our listening must eventually burst into obedience in love. For if we love Jesus, we will obey his commandments (John 14:15). These are the essential marks of a disciple.

Ned Lunn ties the three Benedictine vows of obedience, stability, and conversion of life to the process of discipleship: “Both obedience and stability combine with the commitment to seek out the conversion of our lives and gives the framework within which discipleship occurs in the monastic tradition. Conversion of life is about life-long, inner transformation which ensures discipleship is not a course to complete but a way of life to journey deeper into.”³⁵

The aspects of discipleship captured by obedience, stability, and conversion of life are precisely the aspects most countercultural in our age of individualistic agency, mobility, and instant gratification. Insofar as Concord House embodies these Benedictine vows, they comprise the areas of greatest challenge for would-be disciples of today.

The Rise of New Forms of Monasticism in the Protestant Church

From these early roots of monasticism, we fast forward to the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation. Though the Reformers held a range of perspectives on monasticism, as a whole they took issue with the notion that the extreme commitment demanded by monasticism

³³ Rowan Williams, *Being Disciples: Essentials of Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 2-3.

³⁴ Williams, *Being Disciples*, 16.

³⁵ Ned Lunn, “On Discipleship within the Monastic Tradition,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.nedlunn.com/2017/06/05/on-discipleship-within-the-monastic-tradition/>.

was in some way effective toward salvation and with the requirement of lifelong vows, for which they saw no biblical precedent. As one example, Matthew Levering summarizes the views of Martin Luther: “Luther undermines the viability of monastic religious life by suggesting that the religious orders contribute to a spiritually dangerous focus on works; by his critique of the vows of obedience, stability, and continence; by his emphasis that religious begging should be outlawed; and by his view that monks and friars should not be able to preach or hear confessions.”³⁶ Nevertheless, throughout the Reformation and afterward, monasticism continued to exist in various forms in the Protestant Church, though limited to isolated pockets and under the skeptical eye of a church wary of falling back into the misguided practices of prior centuries.

Fast forwarding again, we pick up the story in the middle of the 20th century, when the works of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer began to lay a theological grounding for the resurgence of monasticism which was already underway.³⁷ Barth recognized the original motivations of monasticism held value for the church of his time. The monastic life was not escapism, “but was (in its own way) a highly responsible and effective protest and opposition to the world, and not least to a worldly Church, a new and specific way of combating it, and therefore a direct address to it – a retreat, in fact, for the purpose of more effective attack.”³⁸ In a time when the church needed a prophetic voice from within to take a stand, Barth saw the potential for that voice to emerge from the monastery. In fact, “Can there be either for the Church or for individuals any genuine approach to the world or men unless there is an equally genuine retreat?”³⁹

³⁶ Matthew Levering, *Was the Reformation a Mistake? Why Catholic Doctrine is Not Unbiblical* (Grand Rapids, ME: Zondervan, 2017), Kindle Edition, p. 136-37.

³⁷ Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 229.

³⁸ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/ 2, ed. G. W. Bromiley, trans. Harold Knight (London: T&T Clark, 1958), 13.

³⁹ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 14.

Bonhoeffer voiced a similar hope in the monastery for the future of the church. In a 1935 letter to his brother Karl-Friedrick, he writes: “The restoration of the church will surely come from a sort of new monasticism which has in common with the old only the uncompromising attitude of a life lived according to the Sermon on the Mount in the following of Christ. I believe it is now time to call people to this.”⁴⁰ Central to the topic of this thesis-project, Bonhoeffer credits the monastery as the place where true discipleship remained alive in the church: “It was decisive that monasticism did not separate from the church and that the church had the good sense to tolerate monasticism. Here, on the boundary of the church, was the place where the awareness that grace is costly and that grace includes discipleship was preserved.”⁴¹ In the community of monks, the faithful believer can withdraw, preserve the purest form of biblical discipleship, and then emerge to bring hope to both church and world. The fullest representation of Bonhoeffer’s debt to monasticism is contained in *Life Together*, to be examined later in this chapter.

Alongside this theological grounding, monasticism has experienced a resurgence in the Protestant church over the last 100 years. Alden Bass places this resurgence in the context of sociopolitical realities in the first half of the 20th century: “Communal life focused on discipleship was seen as a way to heal the wounds left by centuries of religious strife and political turmoil.”⁴² In 1920, the Bruderhof community was founded in Germany in response to the chaos and devastation of the First World War. In 1934, Bonhoeffer began his underground seminary community in Finkenwalde in response to the national German church endorsement of

⁴⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Testament to Freedom*, rev. ed., ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995), 424.

⁴¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 46.

⁴² Alden Bass, “The Way,” 73.

the Nazi regime. In 1938, the Iona Community began in Scotland to close the gap between the church and the working class, and between theology and action. In 1940, Roger Schutz (“Brother Roger”) founded the Taizé community in France to bring healing amid World War II. Brother Roger wrote his master’s thesis on the Rule of Saint Benedict and published his own rule for Taizé, embodying many of the same values and rhythms.⁴³ These are but a few of a long list that extends across the Western church.

This rich, global yet local movement of emerging communities of discipleship has continued until the present day. Many of the most recent communities cluster under the banner of “new monasticism” whose most prominent representatives include Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove of Rutba House (Durham, NC), Shane Claiborne of The Simple Way (Philadelphia, PA), and Andy Freeman and Pete Greig of 24-7 Boiler Room (Reading, UK). In 2004, some 60 practitioners of communal living gathered in Durham, North Carolina to share ideas and give form to the emerging new monasticism.⁴⁴ From that gathering, Rutba House edited and published *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism*, and these 12 marks have become guiding principles for the movement.

1. Relocate to the abandoned places of the Empire.
2. Share economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us.
3. Provide hospitality to the stranger.
4. Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities, and actively pursue a just reconciliation.
5. Humbly submit to Christ’s body, the church.
6. Provide intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community along the lines of the old novitiate.
7. Nurture common life among members of the intentional community.
8. Support celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children.
9. Live in geographical proximity with community members who share a common rule of life.
10. Care for the plot of God’s earth given to us and support local economies.

⁴³ Davis, *Monasticism*, 114.

⁴⁴ Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 237.

11. Practice peacemaking and conflict resolution in the midst of violence within communities along the lines of Matthew 18.
12. Commit to a disciplined, contemplative life.⁴⁵

These marks bear resemblance to their roots in the Desert Fathers and Benedict yet are notably broader and more generous in scope.

Modern Theological Concerns for a New Monasticism

To conclude this section on monasticism, we turn to theologian Donald Bloesch and his examination of the role of monastic communities in the 20th and 21st centuries. In *The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission*, Bloesch outlines 6 guiding principles to establish a paradigm for an evangelical monastic community.⁴⁶ Each of these is meant as a corrective to the challenges that arose in earlier forms of monastic life and seeks to ensure faithfulness to an evangelical understanding of Biblical community. First, the evangelical monastic community should have room for single men, single women, and families, each in their own houses, in line with the Biblical mandate for marriage and procreation. Bloesch points to the Moravians as a positive example of such a community, united for a common mission. We will examine the Moravians later in this chapter. Second, the community should explicitly espouse a Biblical understanding of justification by grace, in recognition of the danger of a monastic commitment leading toward a legalism and self-righteousness based on works. Third, the community must be a center for evangelism and mission. For Bloesch this means the community should train and send out missionaries, but also be a locus of mission, delivering the Gospel message to anyone

⁴⁵ The Rutba House, ed., *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005), xii–xiii.

⁴⁶ Donald Bloesch, *The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 214–17.

who enters for rest or retreat. Fourth, the community should be committed to both private and corporate prayer involving adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and petition. Petition is interceding for the salvation of the world, not seeking a mystical encounter in an elevated presence of God. Fifth, the community regards itself as waiting for and pointing to the coming kingdom of God, not the embodiment of the kingdom already realized. As such, the community is constantly experiencing reform and purification by the Spirit. And lastly, the community must be intimately connected to the church and held accountable by the church.

These principles provide important reference points for any evangelical monastic community and provide a standard as we now examine two historical Protestant communities and later in chapter 4, the ministry of Concord House. Bloesch prefers the title “fellowships of renewal” over monastic order, with an emphasis on renewal of self to bring renewal to the culture, rather than an emphasis on withdrawal and retreat. Regardless of nomenclature, from the beginnings of Antony and Pachomius until now, vibrant, biblically-centered, and aspirational visions of monastic communities have regarded love of God and love of neighbor as the purpose for the community and the formational discipleship practiced within. This very commitment lies at the center of Koinonia Cross and Concord House Ministry.

Protestant Communities of Discipleship and Mission: Herrnhut and Finkenwalde

The Moravians at Herrnhut

We now turn to examine two historical Protestant communities of discipleship and mission: the communities led by Zinzendorf at Herrnhut and Bonhoeffer at Finkenwalde. Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf was born in 1700 into a family of Saxon nobility and was

raised and educated under the heavy influence of the German Lutheran Pietism movement led by Philip Jacob Spener and August Hermann Francke. As a young teenager, Zinzendorf covenanted with four close friends to “labor for the conversation of the heathen, especially of those for whom no one else cared for,” calling themselves the “Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed.”⁴⁷ In 1722, Zinzendorf was approached by Christian David, a member of the *Unitas Fratrum* (United Brethren) in Moravia, and agreed to provide shelter for a group of Bohemian and later Moravian families fleeing persecution from their state churches. The *Unitas Fratrum*, once a flourishing church, was reduced to an exiled remnant after the Roman Catholic Hapsburg victory in the Battle of White Mountain in the Thirty Years’ War. Within a month of Zinzendorf’s invitation, exiled families began to gather on an allotted portion of the Count’s property in Saxony. Zinzendorf’s steward and fellow Pietist, John George Heitz, named the spot “Herrnhut” “with the hope that a community might arise there which should not only be ‘unter des Herrn Hut’ (under the Lord’s watch) but also ‘auf des Herrn Hut’ (on the watch for the Lord).”⁴⁸ The new community was to be protected by the Lord while on watch for the Lord’s return, fulfilling the fifth of Bloesch’s six criteria for fellowships of renewal.

As word of the community and the spiritual leadership of Zinzendorf and his compatriots spread, Herrnhut attracted a widening circle of refugees and religious enthusiasts from Lutheran, Calvinist, Bohemian, Moravian, and state church-dissenting backgrounds. Amid this rapid expansion, tensions and disagreements grew and charismatic voices created schisms among the community. In 1727, Zinzendorf secured official release from his state duties in Dresden and moved into Herrnhut. Reluctantly, he established a set of rules to govern their civic and spiritual

⁴⁷ J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum 1722-1957* (Bethlehem, PA: Moravian Church in America, 1967), 19.

⁴⁸ John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf: The Story of His Life and Leadership in the Renewed Moravian Church* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 62.

life together.⁴⁹ The civic rules took the legal form of the time and were entitled, “Manorial Injunctions and Prohibitions” while the spiritual rules, comprised of forty-two statutes, were deemed voluntary and were entitled, “Brotherly Agreement of the Brethren from Bohemia and Moravia and Others, Binding Them to Walk According to the Apostolic Rule.” On May 12, the entire community repented of their dissension, pledged to obey these rules, and committed to live in love for one another. The “Brotherly Agreement” began with these words: “It shall be forever remembered by the inhabitants of Herrnhut, that it was built on the grace of the living God.... Herrnhut, and its original old inhabitants, must remain in a constant bond of love with all the children of God...[and] seek to maintain among themselves the pure evangelical doctrine, simplicity, and grace.”⁵⁰ Three months later, on August 13, 1727, the community experienced a work of the Holy Spirit marked by unity and love during a confirmation and communion service that later was recognized as the birthdate of the Renewed *Unitas Fratrum*, or the Moravian Church. This work of the Spirit did not mean the end of all strife and conflict but rather provided Herrnhut with the spiritual foundation and commitment to overcome the challenges that created disunity.⁵¹

A.J. Lewis describes the vision of Herrnhut: “The total life of the community – men, women, and children – was organized for the adoration of the Lamb and the advancement of his Kingdom on a world-wide scale.”⁵² From its founding, Herrnhut was established as both a place of refuge and a place to train and send out. As the Spirit began to move among the community, Zinzendorf gradually established practices and rhythms that built spiritual focus and unity among

⁴⁹ Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 74.

⁵⁰ *Memorial Days of the Renewed Church of the Unitas Fratrum* (London: Moravian Publication Office, 1895), 111.

⁵¹ Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 79.

⁵² A.J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 63.

the members, all centered on the worship of the Lamb. Recognizing the importance of spiritual support through friendship, he organized “Bands,” which “consisted of two or three or more persons of some spiritual kinship who met together privately and conversed concerning the state of their hearts, and exhorted, reproved and prayed for one another.”⁵³ These groups met twice a week and became centers for evangelism.

As the resident pastor and spiritual leader of Herrnhut, the care of individual souls was a passion for Zinzendorf. He established a visitation schedule to meet with each member at least every two weeks.⁵⁴ And when twenty-four brothers and twenty-four sisters committed to each pray one hour a day for the community and its ministry of witness, Zinzendorf encouraged the practice to spread, paving the way for the “Hourly Intercession” which continued for over one hundred years as a chain of continuous, unceasing prayer.⁵⁵ Each day began with a morning service and ended with a song service. Zinzendorf and the elders began choosing a scripture text or hymn stanza from the evening service to become the “watchword” for the entire community the following day, a practice that eventually led to the *Daily Texts* which are still published today.⁵⁶ Breaking bread together was also a regular feature at Herrnhut. After the work of the Spirit at the August 13 communion service, when the congregation desired to remain in fellowship rather than return to their own homes, Zinzendorf sent them food from his own kitchen so the time of unity and sharing could continue.⁵⁷ This breaking of bread became a regular practice known as the “Lovefeast,” in imitation of life in the early church described in Acts 2:42-47, and regularly drew outsiders to experience the community. Again in imitation of

⁵³ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 55.

⁵⁴ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 66.

⁵⁵ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 60.

⁵⁶ Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 85.

⁵⁷ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 60.

the early church, the members of Herrnhut each worked not for their own gain or comfort, but so that no one was in need and that all could be trained and equipped for the work of the kingdom.⁵⁸

Deep relationships centered in adoration of the Lamb were essential to life at Herrnhut. In 1728, one year after Bands were created, the first fellowship-based housing group was established for single men, later known as the Single Brethren's House. The house was a residence, a training center in handicraft skills for industry, and a place of study in preparation for mission work. Two years later, a counterpart house opened for single sisters. "In neither case was celibacy held up as the ideal state, but both Single Brethren and Single Sisters pledged themselves to make matrimony secondary to service for Christ and church. Most Moravians eventually married, but many on special assignments postponed marriage until such a time as it fitted into their life's work."⁵⁹ A decade later, Zinzendorf established a "Choir" system whereby the entire community was divided by sex, age, and marital status. An elder was assigned over each "Choir" and led their group into fellowship with one another and with the Lamb, drawing upon the common ground of their station in life and its unique identification with aspects of the life of Christ.⁶⁰ The elder of each choir met with Zinzendorf weekly to share the challenges and blessings emerging from the choir and to seek counsel.

Central to the faith of the community and the source of its zeal and joy was its adoration of the slain Lamb who became the risen Lamb.

Zinzendorf challenged the fashionable world and the fashionable Churchianity of his day not with neat theological theories but with the slaughtered Lamb of God who was truly Man.... Before this image of the Lamb, all the pomp of man's possessions and the prejudice of his class and the pride of his intellect and the bigotry of his denominations must fall down; all that separates man from man, and Christian from Christian, must be laid down at the foot of the cross.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 76.

⁵⁹ Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 84.

⁶⁰ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 68.

⁶¹ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 71.

In the slain Lamb, the sinner sees his own wretchedness and the eternal love of God bound in one, resulting in overwhelming gratitude, freedom from doubt and fear, deliverance from sin, and most of all, a deep wellspring of joy. “Without an awareness of their supreme happiness in the Lamb, we cannot hope to understand the willingness of Zinzendorf and his brethren and sisters of Herrnhut to sacrifice themselves and all that they possessed to carry the power and the fellowship of the Crucified Christ across the world.”⁶²

Combined with this happiness in the Lamb, the uprooted pilgrim identity of the Moravian exiles readily prepared them for a life of missionary service. Reminiscent of David and his band of outcast men in the Cave of Adullam, Zinzendorf had opened his land to welcome a band of exiles, and through the work of the Spirit through discipleship in community, these exiles were transformed into a powerful, unified witness, drawing many to join them and going out as a missionary force. In 1733, the first two Moravian missionaries were sent from Herrnhut in response to a Macedonian call from a slave in the West Indies; by 1740, some sixty-eight had been sent; and by the time of Zinzendorf’s death in 1760, 226 missionaries had gone out. When John Wesley visited Herrnhut in 1738, he wrote, “I would gladly have spent my life here.... Oh when shall THIS Christianity cover the earth, as the ‘waters cover the sea?’”⁶³

At Herrnhut, we see a work of the Spirit mirroring the early church described in Acts 2: guided by a mature spiritual leader, drawing the outcast and the weak, marked by worship and fellowship, and preaching the message of the crucified and risen Lord to the world. Their zeal for single-minded devotion to adoration of the Lamb, unity, and training led them to establish single-gendered housing units and even delay marriage for the priority of God’s mission. The similarities to Concord House are striking and affirming. Even the emphasis on remaining “under

⁶² Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 73.

⁶³ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 77.

the Lord's watch" while "watching for the Lord's return" has come into focus at Concord House over the past 10 years with an increase in teaching about the end times and the second coming of Christ.

The Seminary at Finkenwalde

In 1934, while living in exile and pastoring two German congregations in London, Dietrich Bonhoeffer received a call from the Confessing Church to take leadership of one of its newly formed underground seminaries, created in the wake of pro-Nazi church leaders closing existing seminaries. He responded immediately, returning to Germany in 1935 and establishing a community of young pastors-in-training in Finkenwalde. The project endured until 1937 when Heinrich Himmler declared the Confessing Church seminaries illegal and ordered the Gestapo to close the community. Compelled by his conviction that the church in Germany and worldwide needed a fresh understanding of community, Bonhoeffer penned and published *Life Together* in 1939 as an account of the experiment at Finkenwalde.

In important ways, *Life Together* must be read alongside *Sanctorum Communio*, Bonhoeffer's theological study of the sociology of the church. As Geoffrey B. Kelly notes, *Life Together* "presupposes the Christo-ecclesiological foundation of *Sanctorum Communio*. In *Life Together*, Christians in Christ are moved to do what they would be unable to accomplish without Jesus: to live together and offer one another their self-giving love in a prayerful, compassionate, and caring community."⁶⁴ Jesus, and the individual person's relationship to him made possible by the cross, is the common ground upon which the community is built. It is the presence of Jesus that distinguishes the church from other communities. "Christian community means

⁶⁴ Geoffrey B. Kelly, "Editor's Introduction" in *Life Together*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, trans. Daniel W. Bloesch (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), viii.

community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ.... We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.”⁶⁵

In the opening line of the first chapter of *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer quotes Ps. 133:1, which is also the key verse of the community at Concord House (and referenced by Basil in *Great Aceticon*): “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” Who then is a “brother?” The brothers of Psalm 133 are “persons who no longer seek their salvation, their deliverance, their justification in themselves, but in Jesus Christ alone.”⁶⁶ The unity of these “brothers” cannot be separated from their identity in Jesus and vice versa. We come to know Jesus through the word of God and that word is spoken to us by another who has encountered Jesus. “God has willed that we should seek and find God’s living Word in the testimony of other Christians, in the mouths of human beings.”⁶⁷ Once we encounter Christ, we are bound together in him and only in him, and that unity is eternal as Christ and his body is eternal. We are unified not by seeking community together, but rather we seek Christ and then find ourselves in community with others who are in him.

Bonhoeffer notes the difference between the human ideal and God’s reality when forming community. The human ideal is an emotional community based on fleshly desire producing darkness, enslavement, and “artificial flowers,” ruled by those who wield power and ability through the use of psychological methods. The godly reality is a spiritual community driven by truth producing light, freedom, and fruit, and is ruled by the word of God through the Spirit of God.⁶⁸ True genuine Christian community is not grounded in our strength but rather in a “great

5. ⁶⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. Daniel W. Bloesch (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015),

⁶⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 5.

⁶⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 6.

⁶⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 14, 19.

disillusionment with others, with Christians in general, and...with ourselves....”⁶⁹ When we realize that we are incapable of obeying the word of God and loving one another, we find each other at the cross, in need of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. “The bright day of Christian community dawns wherever the early morning mists of dreamy visions are lifting.”⁷⁰ Bonhoeffer does not espouse that we build a purely spiritual community devoid of physical or emotional elements. Such a spiritualized ideal is sustainable only for the few short days of a retreat but is quickly devoured by the reality of the physical and emotional and in danger of indistinguishably melding physical and spiritual. Rather, a community that knowingly acknowledges and embraces the physical and emotional grounds for unity can identify the limitations of those grounds and pursue true and eternal spiritual unity that comes through Christ alone.⁷¹

After establishing the foundation for spiritual community, Bonhoeffer moves into a description of daily life at Finkenwalde and develops principles applicable to others seeking to establish Christian community.⁷² The specifics bear marked similarities to the Rule of St. Benedict. Life is structured around worship, the breaking of bread, and work, following the natural rhythm of the day, each orienting the community around the central person of Christ. In the morning worship, the community gathers to mark the completion of God’s work in the resurrection and the coming return of Jesus, knowing their story through the story of God, singing his word with one voice, and uttering their own word in prayer as they seek to live together in unity. The breaking of bread reminds the community of rest and nourishment in Christ, the obligation to provide for one another, and the promise of one day partaking of an

⁶⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 10.

⁷⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 11.

⁷¹ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 20.

⁷² Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 23-54.

imperishable bread in eternity, all of which allows the community to see Christ more clearly.⁷³ Through work, most often done apart from others, God purifies the Christian from self-absorption, selfishness, and the demands of the flesh when the Christian is able to see through the “It” of work to the “You” of God, “who commands the work and the deed and makes them serve to liberate Christians from themselves.”⁷⁴ The goal of every member of the community is to experience the unity of the day where prayer (worship) and work become one, fulfilling Apostle Paul’s admonition to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). The day ends with the breaking of bread and a special time of prayer focused on intercession for others, reconciliation with members of the community, and spiritual protection through the night.⁷⁵

For Bonhoeffer, the strength of the community depends on the inter-relationship between time together and time alone. “The day together will be unfruitful without the day alone, both for the community and for the individual.”⁷⁶ Every individual will have time alone and how that time is spent will either strengthen and sanctify the community or weaken and defile it, just as one part of the body affects the whole towards health and life or sickness and death. The demands of life together often mean that time alone can only be preserved through a disciplined daily schedule. The content of this time largely mirrors that of community worship, centered on listening to God in silence by meditating on scripture (adding depth to the breadth of community scripture reading), speaking to God in prayer (appropriating the Word to speak to one’s personal situation), and purifying self and community through intercession (regarding every person as one for whom Christ died).⁷⁷ Bonhoeffer emphasizes that for the pastor of the community,

⁷³ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 46.

⁷⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 50.

⁷⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 52.

⁷⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 57.

⁷⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 59.

intercession is “an indispensable duty on which the whole practice of ministry will depend” and must be a core commitment of the day alone.⁷⁸

Those who tend toward community or toward solitude must be aware of their need for the other. “Those who want community without solitude plunge into the void of words and feelings, and those who seek solitude without community perish in the bottomless pit of vanity, self-infatuation, and despair.”⁷⁹ Without solitude, the individual risks standing before people without centering in Christ, subject to the state of his/her human relationships; without community, the individual is prone to self-centeredness that leads to pride or hopelessness. Every individual needs both and both must be founded on the strength of the word that comes from God.

The time spent apart from the community and in the non-Christian world puts the disciple to the test. How the individual disciple carries him/herself out in the world is the clearest evaluation of the fruitfulness of the community. “Has the community served to make individuals free, strong, and mature, or has it made them insecure and dependent? ...This is one of the toughest and most serious questions that can be put to any form of everyday Christian life in community.”⁸⁰ Put into other terms, the strength of discipleship in the community is demonstrated by the strength and consistency of witness when apart from the community.

Bonhoeffer then moves to describe the contour of the relationships among disciples in the community. While all human relationships tend toward a competition to establish who is greatest through a process of self-justification, judging, and condemning, those in the community of God rejoice in their diversity as a rich tapestry displaying the image of God, calling members of the community to serve one another as image bearers justified by the grace of God. “Once

⁷⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 65.

⁷⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 55-56.

⁸⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 65-66.

individuals have experienced the mercy of God in their lives, from then on they desire only to serve. The proud throne of the judge no longer lures them; instead, they want to be down among the wretched and lowly, because God found them down there themselves. ‘Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly’ (Rom 12:16).”⁸¹

Service in the community of believers begins with listening in love, actively helping in daily life, and bearing one another’s burdens by taking up the cross for each other. In the monastery, this service is accomplished by the vow of obedience, but in Protestant community life, service is a voluntary proclamation of the word of God by mouth and hand which Bonhoeffer implies is more authentic and joyful.⁸² Ultimately, the highest form of service for one another is the service of the word of God. Members of the community see one another as sinners who share in God’s grace and from that common ground are free to speak the truth in love to one another. “We talk to one another about the help we both need. We admonish one another to go the way Christ bids us to go. We warn one another against the disobedience that is our undoing. We are gentle and we are firm with one another, for we know both God’s kindness and God’s firmness.”⁸³

Bonhoeffer regards all greatness and authority as rooted in service. “Genuine spiritual authority is to be found only where the service of listening, helping, forbearing, and proclaiming is carried out.”⁸⁴ This is true spiritual leadership. If the core of Christian life is carrying the cross, it is in the community of believers where this calling is realized by serving one another in obedience to the ultimate authority of the word.

⁸¹ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 72.

⁸² Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 77.

⁸³ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 82.

⁸⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 85.

In the final section of *Life Together*, confession of sin to one another is the gateway to the assurance of salvation and forgiveness, the new life of victory over sin, the cross where sin is exposed and pride is crushed, and the community where forgiven sinners come together in the grace of God. “Other Christians stand before us as the sign of God’s truth and grace. They have been given to us to help us. Another Christian hears our confession of sin in Christ’s place, forgives our sins in Christ’s name. Another Christian keeps the secret of our confession as God keeps it. When I go to another believer to confess, I am going to God.”⁸⁵ The community of believers is by no means a community of pious saints. It is one of forgiven sinners. The Lord’s Supper represents the fulfillment of Christian community: sinners are reconciled to God and to one another now and in eternity through the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This unity and joy is the end of Christian life together.

As Bonhoeffer notes at the start of the text, it is only by God’s grace that any congregation can experience such community on this earth.⁸⁶ Not all Christians are given such grace, and even if so, only for a time, as Bonhoeffer’s community at Finkenwalde endured barely 2 years. Bonhoeffer understood he was preparing these men for ministry within the Nazi regime.⁸⁷ The relationships and spiritual disciplines established at Finkenwalde continued for even from prison Bonhoeffer maintained contact with his students and sustained the daily practice of prayer and reflection using the Moravian *Daily Texts*. From the relatively short-lived community at Finkenwalde emerged a band of disciples resolved to remain faithful to the Word and an account that has inspired generations of like-spirited communities.

⁸⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 88.

⁸⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* 2.

⁸⁷ Victoria J. Barnett, “The Reader’s Guide to *Life Together* in the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works,” in *Life Together*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, trans. Daniel W. Bloesch (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 105.

Among many points of connection, the emphasis at Finkenwalde on the balance between the day together and the day alone is of particular relevance to Concord House. The commitment to loving and serving one another through life together and the outward ministry on campus and at work require a significant portion of every day. As Bonhoeffer notes, time alone can only be sustained through personal discipline. While other brothers will easily notice if one shirks his commitment to the community or ministry, the day alone is less visible and therefore more easily neglected without immediate repercussions. In a sermon on 1 Cor 3:12-15, Leonard Ravenhill notes that wood, hay, and straw are above ground and draw the attention of human eyes.⁸⁸ He likens these to many visible acts of ministry and service. Gold, silver, and precious stones are found below ground, invisible to the human eye, but able to withstand the test of fire. These he likens to spiritual devotion through prayer and the word of God. Weakness within the community and the failure to carry oneself in the world in a manner that glorifies God are often rooted in a lack of attention to and priority for the day alone. The admonitions of Bonhoeffer and Ravenhill are a necessary word for the brothers of Concord House as we seek to build genuine *koinonia* with Jesus and with one another.

Notable Characteristics of Formational Discipleship in *Koinonia*

The final section of this chapter will identify notable characteristics of formational discipleship in *koinonia* as embodied across the history of the church in the examples examined above. While the term “formational discipleship” is not to be found in any of the records of these communities, they all share a similar spiritual DNA, one that can be traced back to the early church in the book of Acts. Recall David Currie’s definition of formational discipleship: “the

⁸⁸ Leonard Ravenhill, “The Judgment Seat of Christ,” accessed March 10, 2024, <http://ravenhill.org/judgment.htm>.

lifelong, faith-filled process of the Holy Spirit transforming the whole person from fallen malformation into the loving likeness of Christ to the glory of the Father as informed by the whole word of God, in relationship with the whole people of God to fulfill the whole mission of God.”⁸⁹ Each of these communities would have identified in large part with this description of their vision and purpose – to both *be* and *do* as Jesus *is* and *does*.

What general characteristics are identifiable among these various communities across time? First, each had a vision centered on loving God with all their heart, soul, and mind (Matt 22:37). This is, after all, the greatest commandment. It is a God-given and God-centered vision and command. For Henri Nouwen, “the Christian community is not a closed circle of people embracing each other, but a forward-moving group of companions bound together by the same voice asking for their attention.”⁹⁰ The clarity of this vision and the commitment of every member to the pursuit of this vision is essential to sustaining the enterprise over time without falling prey to distractions or good, but lesser, goals. As R.A. Torrey famously said, “If loving God with all our heart and soul and might is the greatest commandment, then it follows that not loving Him that way is the greatest sin.”⁹¹ Seeking to obey the greatest commandment as sinners guilty of the greatest sin brought unity, intentionality, Christ-centered dependency, and urgency to these communities, in the context of the opulence of the church in Rome or the persecution of the state and her church. When this clarity and simplicity of vision fades, the community faces the threat of losing its way. The community must establish regular means of remembering and recommitting to their vision.

⁸⁹David A. Currie, “Shaped by the Word: *Sola Scriptura* for Spiritual Formation” in Gordon L. Isaac and Eckhard Schnabel, eds, *Reformation Celebration: The Significance of Scripture, Grace, Faith, and Christ* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2018), Kindle Locations 1379-1384.

⁹⁰ Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 142.

⁹¹ This quote is generally attributed to R.A. Torrey, but a specific reference could not be identified.

Secondly, even as they strove to obey the greatest commandment, these communities were marked by a profound understanding of grace as the ground of obedience. The ability to respond and fulfill God's command comes not from us but from God, given by grace through Jesus Christ. Only because we are "in Christ" can we know, love, and serve God. The single-minded devotion to God of the early monastics, the "inexpressible delight of love" of Benedict, and the "adoration of the Lamb" of Herrnhut are all a response to and enabled by God's word of grace expressed on the cross. The community of disciples is a gathering of the weak, the exiled, and the impossible sinner, who find one another at the foot of the cross where they receive strength, acceptance, and forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb who was slain. Every community must make a self-conscious effort to gather at the cross, lest the human effort mimic true transformation by the Spirit.

Thirdly, these believers viewed *koinonia* as *central* to the task of formational discipleship and faithfulness to the greatest commandment. This task is simply impossible to pursue alone. As Basil compellingly articulated, we were created by God to be in *koinonia*, we need one another to combat sin and develop our gifts, and loving God fully requires the second commandment as well – that we love one another as he loved us. Through a commitment to a specific community – a vow of stability – God accomplishes the work of transforming a fallen sinner into the image of his Son. As Tim Chester and Steve Timmis of The Crowded House in Sheffield, UK, put it, "To be a community of light from which the light of Christ will emanate we need to be intentional in our relationships to love the unlovely, forgive the unforgivable, embrace the repulsive, include the awkward, accept the weird. It is in contexts such as these that sinners are transformed into disciples who obey everything King Jesus has commanded."⁹²

⁹² Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 113.

Fourthly, communities of formational discipleship distilled their visions into a shared commitment to an every day “Way of Life” or “Rule.”⁹³ While there is variation in the specifics from Pachomius to Finkenwalde, participation in the community meant committing to a set of shared practices and values. These commitments were the external scaffolding for the work of formational discipleship in the heart. Peter Scazzero identifies four main categories addressed by a Way or Rule of Life: prayer (including scripture), rest, work, and relationships. “The great, buried gift in a Rule of Life is its goal of regulating our entire lives in such a way that we truly prefer the love of Christ above all things.”⁹⁴ The commitment to obedience, stability, and conversion of life in each of these areas leads to transformation over time and provides a basis for accountability within the community. Each category of the Way of Life requires both individual and corporate responsibility. Regarding prayer, Nouwen notes, “Without community, individual prayer easily degenerates into egocentric and eccentric behavior, but without individual prayer, the prayer of the community quickly becomes a meaningless routine.”⁹⁵ Every Way of Life should enable the community and the individual to support and check one another.

Fifthly, formational discipleship in *koinonia* requires the calling and commitment of an abbot or spiritual leader. These communities would not have existed without Pachomius, Basil, Cassian, Benedict, Zinzendorf, or Bonhoeffer. It is difficult to overstate the importance of these spiritual leaders in the establishment of these communities, the process of formational discipleship, and the fruit born over time. These leaders set the vision, intercede through prayer,

⁹³ “Way of Life” may be preferable to “Rule” for contexts with a cultural or generational suspicion of authority.

⁹⁴ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It’s Impossible to be Spiritually Mature While Remaining Emotionally Immature, Updated Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 98.

⁹⁵ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 145.

teach the word of God, provide a model through their own lives, deal with personal and relational sin, and equip others for leadership.

Finally, these communities of formational discipleship were all marked by an urgent mission to their neighboring enclaves and the wider world, mindful of their returning King who would take them to his eternal home. These leaders and those who gathered around them did not retreat merely for safety and hiding. Rather, their growing love for God and one another compelled them to obey their Master's command to go to their neighbors and to the world – *as a community* – to form more disciples to the glory and pleasure of God. Basil sent his monks into the city. The Moravians traveled the globe. The seminarians at Finkenwalde served the Confessing Church across the nation even at the cost of imprisonment and worse. And for all these examples, their experience and practice of community was central to their witness. As Lesslie Newbigin writes, “The only hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.... Jesus did not write a book but formed a community.”⁹⁶ The motivation and freedom to leave the comfort of the familiar and go out to the world came in part because they knew their community on earth was a “sign, instrument, and foretaste of God’s redeeming grace....”⁹⁷ Their communities were not an end in and of themselves, but were a place for the world to encounter a foreshadowing of the kingdom of God, enter in through the invitation and mercy of the cross, be transformed by the work of the Spirit through the community, and then go out to call others to come and see.

⁹⁶ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 227.

⁹⁷ Newbigin, *The Gospel*, 233.

Conclusion to the Literature Review

This chapter has sought to establish the long history of formational discipleship in *koinonia* and identify common motivations, practices, features, and challenges. While historical and cultural contexts have differed, these communities have drawn upon the word of God and the history of the church, seeking to produce faithful disciples who would bear fruit while together and when sent out to the ends of the earth. The rich and deep history of discipleship in *koinonia* and its inseparable relationship to mission demonstrates its enduring fruitfulness as a biblical model for making disciples of all nations who love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind and who love one another as Jesus loved them.

Indeed, the *koinonia* at Concord House stands upon that long legacy as the continued work of the same Jesus calling disciples one by one to deny ourselves, take up our crosses daily, and follow Him - *together*. The biblical and historical examples in chapters 2 and 3 are both a great cloud of witnesses who spur us on and forerunners who set a standard and example for enduring faithfulness and fruitfulness. We now move to examine how the Spirit has created a place of formational discipleship in *koinonia* in 21st-century Cambridge, MA.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN: CONCORD HOUSE BROTHERS MINISTRY – THIRTY YEARS OF A HOUSE-BASED DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY

Project Design and Implementation

This project emerged from the observation that Concord House Brothers Ministry has been extraordinarily fruitful over the 30 years since its founding in 1993. The focus of this project is to identify *how* and *why* Concord House has consistently produced missional leaders across three generational cohorts by capturing and examining observations, reflections, and testimonies of former and current members of Concord House. The gathered stories will provide an oral history of Concord House.

The project hypothesis is that living-in-community discipleship is an effective model for raising future leaders across generations because it is an ideal setting to foster Koinonia Cross relationships. In chapter three, we briefly reviewed the history of several communities of formational discipleship and identified common motivations, practices, features, and dangers. In this chapter, we will employ the six characteristics common to those discipleship communities as a rubric for determining the key factors leading to fruitfulness in Concord House ministry and thereby test the project hypothesis.

As described in Chapter 1, the data for the project was gathered from the 56 former and current members of Concord House ministry who currently remain a part of Antioch Baptist Church and her sister church network. Contributions were limited to these 56 for ease of access and to limit the scope of the project by examining fruitfulness as demonstrated (in part) by commitment to the church family at Antioch and her sister churches.

Data collection and analysis were designed in consultation with Dr. David Currie, Dr. Bryan Auday, Dr. Theo Huang, and Dr. Dabin Hwang, alongside methods of qualitative analysis common to studies in the social sciences.¹ Four tools were used to gather project data in February 2024. First, seven 90-minute focus groups were conducted over Zoom, involving a total of 51 participants in a semi-structured interview format. Groups were organized by generational cohort to capture generational experience, illuminate differences between groups, and create a setting conducive to greater vulnerability and honesty.² Focus group questions were distributed in advance. Sessions were recorded for data-gathering purposes only and rough transcripts were created using the AI tool embedded within Zoom. Secondly, two online questionnaires were distributed, providing demographic and evaluative data on an individual basis. These two data sets were collected independently to ensure evaluative data could remain anonymous and thereby provide more accurate information. Demographic questionnaire data was gathered from 56 participants before the focus groups and evaluative questionnaire data was collected from the 51 focus group participants after the focus groups were completed. Demographic data has already been summarized in Chapter 1. The bulk of the evaluative questionnaire focused on the factors contributing to fruitfulness with a few questions designed to capture the outcomes of Concord House ministry. Thirdly, mini case studies were collected from 10 participants to further illustrate the themes that emerged from the focus groups. Fourthly, Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim were interviewed as the spiritual leaders or “abbots” of Concord House to provide their perspective as an additional dimension.

¹ The primary written reference for methods of qualitative analysis was taken from: Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, “Fundamentals of Qualitative Data Analysis,” in *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2020), 61-99.

² Focus groups included the following: 2 Gen X groups with a total of 10 participants, including myself; 3 Millennial groups with a total of 24 participants; and 2 Gen Z groups with a total of 17 participants.

Standard methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis were employed on both questionnaire and focus group data. Quantitative questionnaire data was analyzed to identify trends, particularly with respect to generational cohort. Focus group responses were processed using grounded theory methods: an initial coding phase (identifying and grouping common responses) and then an axial coding phase (grouping codes into categories). Responses were analyzed to identify characteristics contributing to formational discipleship, factors underlying long-term fruitfulness, and generational differences and overlap. The interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim will be used in Chapter 5 as a reference point in interpreting the data collected from house residents.

Summary of Focus Group Data

The following section is a summary review of the data from 10 focus group questions. For each of the 10 questions, a summary data chart and a brief description of notable themes and insights are followed by the relevant mini case study. Responses to the focus group questions were coded according to distinct themes in the response even if multiple distinct themes were articulated by a single participant. And not every participant responded to every question. Response counts for a single question ranged from 53 to 140.

Motivations for Joining Concord House

To understand the mindset of residents upon entry into Concord House, focus groups were asked to share their motivations for joining. Responses were divided into 14 codes which were grouped into 5 categories (listed from most cited to least cited): the influence of others, a spiritually-motivated purpose, a desire for relationships with others in the house, prior experience, and a sense of need that could be met by the house.

Table 3. Motivations for joining

	X	Y ³	Z	Total
Influence of others	8	15	10	33
Sense of privilege	6	6	1	13
Staff encouraged	1	5	5	11
Desire to share experience of older residents	1	4	4	9
Spiritual purpose	5	7	16	28
Discipleship	1	2	7	10
Commitment to church	1	4	3	8
Became a Christian	1	1	5	7
Center of church	1	-	1	2
Leadership training	1	-	-	1
Relationship	6	8	10	24
Live with Christian peers	1	4	6	11
Fun	3	2	1	6
Live with older brothers	1	2	1	4
Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah	1	-	2	3
Experience	7	8	5	20
Weekends/Summer	5	5	5	15
Natural	2	3	-	5
Need	3	3	2	8
Accountability	2	2	2	6
Circumstance	1	1	-	2
Total	29	41	43	113

“Influence of others” was the top category overall, as well as among Gen X and Millennials (Gen Y). Many cited a sense of privilege in the church community associated with being invited to join. While only 11 explicitly mentioned being invited to join the house during the focus group, in the post-focus group survey, 50 of the 51 indicated they were invited by their leaders to consider moving into Concord House; only 1 took the initiative himself. Others also cited a desire to experience what older spiritual brothers experienced at the house. One Gen X

³ For consistency with Gen X and Gen Z, the charts in this chapter use “Y” to indicate Gen Y, or millennials. Gen X includes 10 residents born between 1973-79; Gen Y includes 25 residents born from 1980-94; and Gen Z includes 16 residents born from 1995-2000.

resident touched on many of these themes: “I spent weekends at Concord House as an undergrad and I was even allowed to join the end of a summer discipleship series with Dr. Rebekah. When I was invited to move in, I wanted to join the group because I saw the lives of the older brothers and I knew it was a privilege to be trained by Dr. Rebekah.”⁴ A millennial resident echoed similar interconnected motivations:

I was blessed at church through hearing the word of God and was invited by my leader to consider moving in. I talked with him and other older brothers a lot about what they experienced at Concord House. It seemed burdensome to live together, but when I stayed over during the weekends, it became clear they could help me live out my faith. I was having a hard time in many areas of my life and I knew it was the right move if I was committed to my relationship with God.⁵

Not everyone was clear about the purpose of moving in. One millennial said, “I didn’t really know what I was getting into, but I saw the older brothers who lived there and I knew I wanted to be part of that, to experience what they were experiencing.”⁶

“Spiritual purpose” was the most cited category for Gen Z, followed by relationship and the influence of others. “Spiritual purpose” included a desire for discipleship, a change of values and priorities after recently becoming a Christian, and a step of increased commitment to the church. One Gen Z resident shared: “At Concord, I saw a family of God with the same goal to grow deeper in relationship with God. There was a different kind of commitment at this church. I had never seen 10 to 40 years of relationship. I was challenged – do I want these types of relationships? Yes, I do.”⁷

Though a sense of “need” was not cited often, when cited, it was specific and urgent. “I had no choice. After messing up my life at the start of college, this was the only place I could

⁴ Focus Group Gen X2, February 13, 2024.

⁵ Focus Group Gen Y2, February 15, 2024.

⁶ Focus Group Gen Y2, February 15, 2024.

⁷ Focus Group Gen Z2, February 14, 2024.

go.”⁸ “I was struggling with internet pornography and an overall sense of purposelessness. I asked about moving to Timor (where we had a mission church), but Pastor B suggested I move to Concord House.”⁹

Mini Case Study 1: “Too Good to Pass Up” – Joshua Kondo¹⁰

When my leader asked me in the summer of 1993 about living at Concord House with other church brothers starting from the fall semester, I was overjoyed and immediately agreed. Having accepted Christ as a college sophomore in the fall of 1992, I had already moved out of my dorm at the end of that semester. I had chosen to live independently in an apartment near campus because I felt uneasy around my roommate and dorm friends, who struggled to comprehend and accept my newfound faith in Jesus. In their eyes, I had transformed into a fanatic, departing from the carefree college kid who enjoyed participating in secular activities typical of our generation.

My decision to move out of the dorm was driven by my own will and strong personal conviction. Yet, the solitude I experienced after distancing myself from friends I used to spend time with left me feeling lonely. I constantly looked forward to and craved Christian fellowship, especially with fellow brothers with whom I had become close friends. We were all similar in age and were included in the same discipleship group led by Dr. Rebekah. The prospect of living with these fellow Christian brothers and undergoing leadership training under Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah felt like a dream come true – an opportunity too good to pass up. Little did I know that by God’s grace, I would still be serving at our church 31 years later as one of many pastors trained and raised at Concord House!

Reasons for Perseverance

Over the 30-year history of Concord House ministry, some chose not to accept the invitation to join and others moved in but chose to move out, determining Concord House life was not for them. Focus groups were asked to discuss why they have persevered in their

⁸ Focus Group Gen X2, February 13, 2024.

⁹ Focus Group Gen Y3, February 17, 2024.

¹⁰ Joshua Kondo, b. 1973 (Gen X), Tokyo, Japan. B.A. in Philosophy and J.D., Boston College; M.Div. candidate, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. College pastor at Antioch Baptist Church; served as a missionary over a 20-year period in Japan, Myanmar, Korea, Turkey, Armenia, and the Republic of Georgia. Name and biographical information used by permission.

commitment to the *koinonia* at Concord. Responses were divided into 13 codes which were grouped into 5 categories (listed from most cited to least cited): experience at the house, a sense of what is spiritually right, need for the house, spiritual commitment, and relationship to one another.

Table 4. Reasons for perseverance

	X	Y	Z	Total
Experience	3	11	2	16
Grace of God	3	7	1	11
Love	-	3	1	4
Too much to lose	-	1	-	1
Right	2	9	4	15
Conviction from God and word of God	-	6	2	8
No other option	1	1	2	4
Positive and negative examples	1	2	-	3
Need	2	5	3	10
Need for one another	2	3	1	6
Need for, value of, spiritual training	-	2	2	4
Spiritual commitment	5	2	-	7
Commitment to church	4	1	-	5
Prioritizing over other commitments	1	1	-	2
Relationship	3	3	1	7
Vision for future	3	-	-	3
Family of God	-	2	-	2
Trust	-	1	1	2
Total	15	30	10	55

As a follow-up to “reasons for joining,” less time was devoted to “reasons for perseverance,” hence less data to code. Millennials cited their experience of grace and love at the house as the primary reason for their perseverance, followed closely by their sense of conviction of what is right before God. “Others were more mature, responsible, spiritual than me. I had an internet pornography issue but leaders and older brothers were there for me, and I knew I wouldn’t be able to find this elsewhere. I had problems, but it was the grace of God that kept

me.”¹¹ “God is at work here and it’s where he wants me to be. Secondly, it’s the love I experienced through this house despite who I am and what I’ve done.”¹²

For Gen X, “spiritual commitment” to church and Concord House over other priorities was the most cited reason for perseverance. “It was part of my commitment to our church, to be trained together, toward the vision of planting churches together. Even over my academics and my career.”¹³ For Gen Z, the dataset was small since they have been part of Antioch and her sister church network for fewer years. Gen Z’s top cited reason was a sense of conviction: “I knew there was a difference between dorm life and Concord House. I need this environment to be disciplined, to have boundaries and limits for my own sake.”¹⁴

Mini Case Study 2: “Tenacious Love” – Dabin Hwang¹⁵

I first moved into Concord House because I wanted help to deal with an internet addiction. The leaders and brothers did everything they could to help me, but I was so self-absorbed and stuck in the pit of sin and guilt that I didn't have the will to fight my sin. So I continued to do what I wanted in secret. At the end of the academic year, I went to spend summer break with my parents in Korea to reconsider where my life was headed. But instead of using that time as a chance to start over, I fell deeper into my addiction and ignored my leaders’ and Concord House brothers’ efforts to stay in touch. I was ready to take a leave from college to complete my mandatory Korean military service, as a way to escape from my problems and from having to face my sin and face myself.

But Concord House did not give up on me. They continued to pray for me, and Dr. Rebekah, who was also in Korea for a part of the summer, invited me to fellowship with our church members in Korea with food and games and then invited me to join the church Summer Mission Trip to Myanmar. Even after the fellowships and the mission trip, I just didn’t want to give in and was still intent on going to the army for 2 years. At the end of the summer, out of concern for my life and spiritual well-being – knowing that the culture and setting of the Korean army would be a terrible spiritual environment – the brothers

¹¹ Focus Group Gen Y3, February 17, 2024.

¹² Focus Group Gen Y2, February 15, 2024.

¹³ Focus Group Gen X1, February 13, 2024.

¹⁴ Focus Group Gen Z2, February 14, 2024.

¹⁵ Dabin Hwang, b. 1993 (Gen Y), Seoul, Korea. A.B. in Neurobiology and Neurosciences, Harvard College; Ph.D. in Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology, Boston College. Academic researcher; volunteer Harvard ministry staff at Antioch Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

and leaders pleaded with me to come back to continue school and hold off from going to the army until I graduated from college. By God's grace, I somehow agreed and came back to continue school while living at Concord. Though it took some time, I eventually came to repentance through many prayers and the word of God, and I surrendered my life to Jesus for the first time.

As I look back now, I realize how much grace and generosity I was shown by Dr. Rebekah and Concord House. They chose to forgive me and keep loving me patiently and tenaciously, even when I hurt them and trampled on their efforts to help me. They took responsibility for my life, even though they had no reason to do so in any human sense; they did so because they loved God and wanted to love me as God loved me. I stuck around at Concord House, not because of any characteristic or merit of my own, but because I experienced the concrete and responsible love of God through Concord House ministry.

Articulation of the Vision of Concord House

Focus groups discussed how the vision of Concord House was articulated during their time living in the house, as a means of assessing the clarity and consistency of vision across generations. Responses were divided into 18 codes which were grouped into 3 categories (listed from most cited to least cited): spiritual training and discipleship, experiencing life together, and pursuing a future vision.

Table 5. Articulation of vision

	X	Y	Z	Total
Training and Discipleship	15	27	15	57
Leadership training	8	9	6	23
Discipleship	2	5	4	11
Cave of Adullam ¹⁶	-	4	2	6
Ministry center	-	4	-	4
Have a heart for others	-	2	2	4
Mirrors	2	1	-	3
Grow together	3	-	-	3
Cross bearing life	-	1	1	2
Importance of one person ¹⁷	-	1	-	1
Life together	4	14	7	25
Psalms 133:1	1	4	3	8
Acts 2 / life together	-	3	2	5
Here is love ¹⁸	-	4	1	5
Family of God	1	1	1	3
Koinonia Cross ¹⁹	2	1	-	3
Oasis	-	1	-	1
Future vision	1	5	5	11
Via Egnatia legacy ²⁰	1	2	2	5
Dream trees ²¹	-	2	1	3
Baton passers ²²	-	1	2	3
Total	20	46	27	93

¹⁶ “Cave of Adullam” is a reference to 1 Samuel 22 which tells of King David and the band of outcast men he trained to become an army. This theme is described in chapter 2 of this thesis.

¹⁷ “Importance of one person” is a reference to Dr. Rebekah Kim’s teaching that one person’s life/soul is more important than the whole world, taken from Mat 16:26 and Mat 18:21, as well as numerous examples of Jesus going out of his way for one lost sheep (Mar 5:1-20; Mar 5:21-42; Luk 15; Mat 15:21-28).

¹⁸ “Here is Love,” composed by William Rees, is the theme song of Concord House. See Appendix F for the lyrics.

¹⁹ Given the hypothesis of this thesis, it is notable that within “life together,” “Koinonia Cross” was mentioned explicitly only 3 times. This point will be further explored in chapter 5.

²⁰ “Via Egnatia legacy” is a reference to Dr. Rebekah Kim’s illustration during the Concord House 30th Anniversary Trip to Greece and Italy. Standing on the Via Egnatia Roman road in ancient Philippi used by Apostle Paul, she challenged Concord House to walk in the footsteps of Apostle Paul and all those who have gone before, as they imitate Christ.

²¹ “Dream tree” is an English translation of a Korean term metaphor for children who carry the hope for the future. Dr. Rebekah Kim sometimes uses this term to refer to the young people and children in the church.

²² “Baton passer” is a frequently used metaphor at Antioch and her sister churches for the responsibility of each generation to faithfully pass the heritage of the church to the next generation, like the members of a relay team.

The consistency in category rankings across all three generations underscores the enduring nature of the vision over time. The clarity of the vision is exemplified by the consolidation of 18 codes into just 3 categories. Notably, “training and discipleship” received 2 to 4 times more citations than “life together,” with the latter being cited 2 to 4 times more than “future vision.” Among the codes under “training and discipleship,” “leadership training” emerged as the top cited. Each of the focus groups displayed consensus that residing at Concord House served the purpose of nurturing future church leaders, a concept tightly intertwined with the “future vision” category. This distinguishing characteristic set Concord House apart from other living communities within the church, all of which share a common emphasis on “life together.” As one resident aptly expressed, “Concord House is not merely a fraternity.”²³ While not all residents grasped the vision before moving in, active participation in the community facilitated a clear understanding and alignment with the vision over time.

Many quoted Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah’s oft-repeated church-wide vision to “raise leaders for the 21st century.” Some referenced the original group of brothers being formed through discipleship in the book of Acts and the weight of that legacy passing down over the years. As one participant reflected, “That’s how it all started.”²⁴ This initial cohort of brothers was appointed as undergraduate “campus outreach leaders” within their first semester at the house. Nearly every facet of life at Concord House is intertwined with leadership development in some capacity. One millennial resident encapsulated this sentiment: “The night meetings with Dr. Rebekah in the basement. Taking on ministry and service responsibilities within the house, on campus, and for the church. Joining special events at Concord House to welcome visitors or mark occasions. Studying the Bible in the original languages in the basement. The times of

²³ Focus Group Gen Y1, February 14, 2024.

²⁴ Focus Group Gen Y1, February 14, 2024.

spiritual correction. We understood all of it was leadership training.”²⁵ Another resident added, “Even when playing games, we were taught to exercise quick but right judgment and to play with integrity, nobility, and generosity.”²⁶

Mini Case Study 3: “Vision Actualized” – Paul Choi²⁷

Through the campus ministry of our church, I went from a freshman who got lost in the sins of dorm life, to a repentant sinner returning as a prodigal to my Father. A Thanksgiving Bible Study changed the course of my life. And because it happened when I was a freshman in college, it was natural for me to commit to campus ministry. At Boston University, I began to serve in various ways and by my senior year, I was the campus ministry president and student leader.

Upon graduation, we were invited to join Concord House. After I repented my freshman year, I stayed over nearly every weekend so in many ways Concord House had become my 2nd home. So when the opportunity opened up to move there, it was really a no-brainer of a decision. We all desired to catch the vision of Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah to train and raise up church leaders for the 21st century through Concord House ministry.

When the older generation of us brothers eventually got married and moved out, we had developed, over the course of many years and the ups and downs of doing campus ministry, “covenantal” relationships. As we had undergone so much spiritual battle together, we considered one another like a band of brothers for the Lord. And while we had the vision to stick together to one day be sent out to plant churches elsewhere, not many of us thought we would eventually become ordained pastors of our church. But of course, God had that vision for us, and it was actualized by the sacrifice and suffering of our shepherds as well as the prayers of so many people.

After 30 years, it is still amazing grace to me that so many of us are still serving the Lord together. And we continue to retain and sustain the identity, history, and legacy of having been Concord House brothers who were directly shaped and discipled under our founding pastoral couple. And now there are multiple generations of Concord House ministry being trained for the advancement of the Gospel. All glory to God.

²⁵ Focus Group Gen Y3, February 17, 2024.

²⁶ Focus Group Gen Y3, February 17, 2024. Dr. Rebekah created the mantra “I-N-G” to remind everyone to demonstrate “integrity, nobility, and generosity” when playing games, and in life.

²⁷ Paul Choi, b. 1975 (Gen X), Seoul, Korea. B.A. in History and M.A. in Sociology, Boston University; M.Div., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; S.T.M., Yale Divinity School; Ph.D. in Church History, Boston University. Adjunct faculty at Eastern Nazarene College; college pastor and Pilot Light Ministry prayer director at Antioch Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

The Marks of a “Rule of Concord House”

As true for the formational discipleship communities described in Chapter 2, Concord House has a set of corporate practices, standards, and expectations that shape life and relationships in the community. These norms (whether spoken or unspoken) have never been codified into a “rule” of any kind. The accounts gathered through these focus groups may indeed provide the foundation for a future “Rule of Concord House.” This discussion elicited the most responses among all 10 questions. Responses were divided into 18 codes, which were grouped into these 4 categories (listed from most cited to least cited): worship, common life, relationship, and work.

Table 6. Community practices

	X	Y	Z	Total
Worship	15	23	8	46
Prayer	4	14	1	19
Devotional sharing	7	5	3	15
Bible study	1	4	3	8
Memorizing hymns	2	-	-	2
House retreats	1	-	1	2
Common Life	17	18	7	42
Cleaning and cooking/meals	7	4	4	15
Sharing everything	6	4	1	11
Limit on media / internet	1	7	1	9
Exercising	1	3	1	5
Financial need	2	-	-	2
Relationship	13	18	7	38
Involved in each other's lives	4	7	2	13
Fellowship time	5	4	2	11
Family of God	3	3	-	6
Accountability partners	1	2	2	5
Authority	-	2	1	3
Work	4	6	4	14
Serving church	3	3	2	8
Hospitality	1	1	2	4
Worldwide ministry center	-	2	-	2
Total	49	65	26	140

Practices related to worship were most frequently cited, with an even division between prayer and scripture. Precise forms of prayer and scripture study/reflection varied widely over time, but core elements remained consistent. Prayer has included both corporate and individual elements: daily or at least weekly prayer meetings in various groupings, interceding together for one another and the church plus time for personal prayer, either first thing in the morning or late in the evening to suit the varying schedules of residents. House gatherings of any kind begin and end with time for prayer. All house members participate in church-wide prayer ministry,

including a one-hour weekly shift in a 24-hour church prayer chain called “Pilot Light Ministry.”²⁸

Current residents specifically mentioned the role of the chatroom for Concord House on the KakaoTalk messaging app (utilized since the fall of 2020). The chatroom includes all current residents plus Dr. Rebekah and myself and is used particularly for urgent and important prayer updates from around the world. Dr. Rebekah posts her own prayers as she becomes aware of needs and house residents post their own prayers for that need, often throughout the day whenever brothers can post a prayer. The resulting effect is a chatroom constantly abuzz with prayers, serving as a reminder to each member to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). One millennial resident shared, “Dr. Rebekah brings us to the forefront of the prayer battle through the Kakao room. We learn of prayer needs even before the deacons at our church. That much she wants us to be people of prayer, to get out of ourselves, and to have a heart for others.”²⁹ Another said, “It is admittedly a bit of a challenge to stay on top of that constantly active room, but I realized I am the one who is blessed to post a prayer even if I’m only echoing what others have already written.”³⁰

Studying and reflecting on the scriptures is a basic expectation of Concord House residents, reinforced over the years through a regular practice of sharing insights and convictions from personal devotional time (DT). The first group of brothers met 4 nights a week for “DT sharing” – twice with Dr. Rebekah and twice among themselves. Every focus group shared memories of impactful Bible studies led by Dr. Rebekah from texts such as Acts, Romans, Ephesians, Ruth, and even lessons on passages in the original Hebrew and Greek.

²⁸ “Pilot Light Ministry” (PLM) is so named because prayer functions like the pilot light on a gas stove, burning constantly to ignite the people and ministries of Antioch and her sister churches across the globe.

²⁹ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

³⁰ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

The second most-cited category was “common life,” including sharing meals together, cleaning responsibilities, all manner of possessions including clothing and cars, and even financial resources when needed. It is generally understood that anyone with time to cook for themselves should cook enough for others. All food is shared and paid for together, no small feat for a group of hungry, young men. This shared common life actually began with Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah who opened their home from the start, sharing freely with their upstairs residents. If Dr. Rebekah’s mother, Grandma Ho Re, ever encountered a brother coming home, she invariably invited him into her kitchen for a delicious home-cooked meal. Some recounted intentionally loitering (loudly) outside the front door knowing Grandma Ho Re would surely hear and provide. Several brothers (including myself) received free housing from Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah for extended periods in times of financial need.

Agreements to limit engagement with media began with the “original” Concord Brothers who decided to limit television and video game use to group fellowship only. Starting in 2014, upon the realization that several brothers were struggling with various forms of internet addiction, Concord House agreed upon a formal commitment to safeguard usage of the internet by implementing a 1 AM-7 AM Wi-Fi downtime and by establishing internet accountability partners.

The third most-cited category was “relationship,” including an unspoken commitment to prioritize involvement in the lives of other brothers by spending time together, serving one another, and being available for each other. The original group drove 4 hours roundtrip twice a week to pick up a brother attending school two hours away so that he could spend the weekends at Concord House. It is not uncommon to wake up in the middle of the night for an urgent prayer request or to help address a personal or ministry need. Student residents make a point to study

together even though they attend different schools. Many take up new interests such as rock climbing, running, basketball, or cooking for the sake of building relationship with others. Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah set the tone, knowing and remembering the needs of each brother and his parents, grandparents, and siblings, praying and often providing counsel late into the night.

The final category was “work,” including serving as the go-to manpower for church needs and showing hospitality to anyone seeking fellowship or shelter. Concord House brothers have been the first called to move a family to a new home, serve as the commando team to claim space and grill for church picnics, design swag for campus outreach, create videos for church anniversaries and mission reports, and build a phone app for summer mission trips. Since the very beginning of Concord House ministry, Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah encouraged the brothers to use the house as the base for college brothers’ ministry. Every weekend, undergraduate students sleep over, and every summer, groups of undergrads move in while they work or attend summer school. Concord House brothers rearrange their rooms and schedules to accommodate, incorporating these guests into house life as much as possible, treating them like younger brothers. As noted in Table 3 above, many brothers pointed to their experiences during weekends and summers as important to their eventual decision to become long-term residents of Concord House. The hospitality of Concord House has become one of its most effective means of attracting new members.

Mini Case Study 4: “A Steady Stream of Prayer” – Michael Chi³¹

Dr. Rebekah often says to us, “With privilege comes responsibility.” All Concord Brothers are privileged, but the current generation of Concord Brothers (of which I am part) have the special privilege of being included in the “All Concord + Dr. Rebekah”

³¹ Michael Chi, b. 1991 (Gen Y), Dallas, TX. B.S. in Biology and M.S. in Biotechnology, Brandeis University. Software implementation manager; volunteer Brandeis ministry staff at Antioch Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

Kakao chatroom. Even though the Kakao chat room can be overwhelming and even make long airplane rides of non-internet connectivity feel peaceful, I know I need it because it keeps me grounded and helps me get out of myself by staying united with the family of God through prayer.

The period I most experienced the blessing of the Kakao chatroom was during my extended stay in Taiwan when my paternal grandfather's health was in critical condition. It was a dual blessing. The first blessing was the constant prayers for my grandfather from everyone in the chatroom. My family's primary prayer request was for there to be a clear sign that my grandfather put his faith in God. Just a couple of days before he passed, he clearly responded by nodding to his pastor's question of whether he believed in John 14:1-6. This was an amazing miracle and answer to prayer because, during our previous visits to the hospital, it was unpredictable whether my grandfather would be conscious. Often, he was unresponsive. I felt privileged knowing that my Concord family was praying the whole time and God heard everyone's prayers!

The second blessing was the posts about ongoing church-wide prayer requests that in hindsight were just as personally impactful. Even though my grandfather's health was in a critical state, we were in a holding pattern for 1.5 weeks waiting for God's time to take him. When we weren't visiting my grandfather or out eating, I was alone in an apartment with my mom and there was a lot of room to be consumed with thoughts about my grandfather and even room to be lazy. But the steady stream of Kakao notifications with prayer requests from other Concord brothers and other church members served as a constant reminder for me to be spiritually sober. I needed Dr. Rebekah's constant call to prayer to remind me of how I should be living as a prayer warrior not just for my family or my needs, but for others as well even in the midst of a family emergency.

Unique Contributions of Community Life Towards Formational Discipleship

Focus groups were asked to reflect on their experience of formational discipleship while living at Concord House and to consider specifically what aspects of discipleship were possible at Concord House that might have been more difficult to experience or access outside of a living community setting. Responses were divided into 14 codes which were grouped into 4 categories (listed from most-cited to least-cited): the experience of wrestling with sin, learning to love others, building relationship with one another, and putting the word of God into practice.

Table 7. Role in formational discipleship

	X	Y	Z	Total
Wrestling with sin	22	18	12	52
Mirror	4	13	4	21
Trained together	6	3	4	13
Accountability	7	2	4	13
Conflicts with others	5	-	-	5
Loving others	6	8	6	20
Heart for others	3	6	2	11
Selfishness	1	1	3	5
Self-centeredness	2	1	1	4
Building relationships	4	10	3	17
Depth of relationship	2	7	2	11
Spiritual leaders	2	2	-	4
Trust	-	1	1	2
Praxis	4	8	3	15
Practice “life together”	4	3	2	9
Flexibility and availability	-	1	1	2
Biblical standard	-	2	-	2
Ministry setting	-	2	-	2
Total	36	44	24	104

Half of all responses, and more than double any other category, were designated as “wrestling with sin.” The overwhelming sentiment across the focus groups was that living together enabled them to become aware of and deal with personal sinfulness in a way that would not have been possible otherwise. Housing arrangements over the years usually meant for tight quarters: 2 to 4 people per bedroom; 4 to 12 people sharing one bathroom (12 was just for one summer); and 5-14 people sharing one kitchen. And tight quarters created more opportunities to see each other with your guard down.

Millennial residents were impacted most by others who served as mirrors through which they came to see and know themselves more clearly. “It was easy to think I could get along with other people until we started living together. I learned how hard it is for others to love me and for

me to love them.”³² “I realized in community things about me that I didn’t know at all, even my tendencies. How little I knew myself.”³³ “Who you are comes out over time, I learned who I was and I was able to see my sin. And then I was able to be grateful that I’m still loved despite who I am.”³⁴

Gen X and Z shared similar sentiments but equally referenced the value of being trained together and keeping one another accountable in the fight against sin. A Gen Z resident shared, “When my selfishness was exposed and others helped me repent – it’s hard to do. It’s something only your parents would do. You can’t experience that unless they truly love you.”³⁵ And a Gen X resident said, “We were accountable to one another. The other guys challenged me to be more mature.”³⁶ Gen X members were the only ones to convey wrestling with sin in the context of conflict with one another: “There were lots of opportunities to rub each other the wrong way – we were all so different.”³⁷ “We confronted our sin even in our friction with one another.”³⁸ This is likely since Gen Xers were the earliest residents of the house and were living among peers without established relational norms nor the steadying presence of older brothers.

Learning to love one another was the second most-cited category. The focus groups spoke about this in terms of developing a heart for other people and realizing the depth of their selfishness and self-centeredness. A Gen Z resident summarized his experience: “I would prefer to be alone, but I had to get outside of myself and think of others, not only what I wanted or what was in my best interest, but how I should care for another person, how every person in the house

³² Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

³³ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

³⁴ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

³⁵ Focus Group Z1, February 18, 2024.

³⁶ Focus Group X2, February 13, 2024.

³⁷ Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

³⁸ Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

is important.”³⁹ One millennial put it this way: “As Dr. Rebekah always says, I had to learn to be a human being – to be thoughtful of others. It wasn’t even necessarily spiritual, just human. To think of others more than myself.”⁴⁰ Another millennial member shared about change as he grew into leadership roles in the house: “Especially as I got older, I had to be responsible for other brothers, I had to have a heart.”⁴¹

Building relationships was the next category and included a depth of relationship with other brothers and spiritual leaders made possible by being physically together and experiencing so much of life together. Residents spoke of “knowing each other well,” “accepting each other’s differences,” and “learning to trust” each other. Several cited the importance of Dr. Rebekah and other leaders in the house helping to facilitate these relationships and resolve conflicts.

The final category was “praxis” – the opportunity to put the word of God into practice with one another. A Gen X member said, “Without others, I would not know concretely what it means to live life together. It would just be theory. It’s all talk until it comes to caring for and loving other people.”⁴² One millennial connected it to Koinonia Cross: “Living alone, I would have no Koinonia Cross. But at Concord House, I have 3 sides (shepherd, sheep, and peer) and I’ve learned concretely how to live out the Koinonia Cross in all directions.”⁴³ Another millennial described the lasting impact even after getting married and moving out: “Concord was my first time to live with Christians and it became the norm for my Christian life. So many of us grew up in this house, so even after we got married, we were not nucleated into our physical families. It cultivated a healthy and rare balance in our relationships between peer and spouse.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Focus Group Z1, February 18, 2024.

⁴⁰ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

⁴¹ Focus Group Y3, February 17, 2024.

⁴² Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

⁴³ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

⁴⁴ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

Life at Concord teaches residents to be flexible and available at a moment's notice for the needs of other residents, weekend and summer guests, and the church as a whole.

Mini Case Study 5: “Broken by Mercy” – Philip Kim⁴⁵

Concord House was a place where we could brush up against each other and get to know each other very well, including our flaws and foibles. It was a chance to sharpen each other like iron sharpens iron. The problem is, I thought my role was to be the one who does the sharpening. My judgmental attitude combined with a sharp tongue led me to clash with my brothers time and again.

With one peer in particular, we had many ups and downs. He is good-natured and unassuming by nature, but all I could focus on were the times he was forgetful or made decisions in everyday life and in ministry that I considered to be wrong. And I sure let him know it! Eventually, things boiled over, but through the counsel and rebuke of leaders, I could see the log that is in my own eye. I thought that I could “improve” my brother, focusing on the speck in his eye, but all the while my unloving attitude was a grave sin. It was one of several times that God has broken me through relationship problems, showing me both my lack of love and also how hard it is for others to love an abrasive person like me. These are sides of me I could not have perceived if I were living by myself. As painful as some of these incidents were, it's ultimately God's mercy to have shown me who I am, and how He desires me to love others as myself.

Tendencies and Traits Challenged by Living in Community

To provide another angle on the relationship between life at Concord House and formational discipleship, focus groups were asked to identify what individual tendencies and traits were helpfully challenged by living together. Responses we divided into 12 codes which were grouped into 3 categories (listed from most cited to least cited): individualism, egotism, and control.

⁴⁵ Philip Kim, b. 1987 (Gen Y), Berkeley, CA. A.B. in Classics, Harvard College; M.St. in Latin Language and Literature, Oxford University; Ed.M., Harvard Graduate School of Education; Ph.D. candidate in Education Policy, University of Pennsylvania. Volunteer University of Pennsylvania ministry staff at Philadelphia Mission Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

Table 8. Tendencies and traits challenged

	X	Y	Z	Total
Individualism	18	27	25	70
Selfishness, greed	9	7	14	30
Heartlessness	2	8	6	16
Self-sufficiency, independence	2	8	4	14
Self-centeredness	3	2	1	6
Laziness	2	2	-	4
Egotism	2	8	2	12
Pride	1	5	-	6
Resistance to authority	-	1	2	3
Insecurity	-	2	-	2
Self-righteousness	1	-	-	1
Control	8	1	0	9
Need for control	5	1	-	6
Inflexibility	2	-	-	2
Dying to self	1	-	-	1
Total	28	36	27	91

Out of 91 responses, an overwhelming majority – 70 – were grouped under “individualism.” This was the top category for all generations and especially for Gen Z (25 out of 27 Gen Z responses). This general “individualism” was expressed in a variety of forms: selfishness, heartlessness, self-sufficiency, self-centeredness, and laziness. Discussion centered around agreement that life together pushed residents to redefine boundaries and open themselves to others. Several representative quotes on individualism are provided below.

On selfishness: “I had to give up myself of what belongs to me and understand what it means to share and be generous.” – Gen X resident

On laziness: “I just could not be lazy. We were always on call to be available to help others – shoveling snow, moving, being woken up at odd hours of the night.” – Gen X resident

On self-sufficiency: “I thought I could live Christian life on my own, but I realized just how much I need others.” – Millennial resident

On selfishness: “Every time I was corrected by others, it was because of my lack of heart, my selfishness. I have come to realize that my life is not my own but I exist in the context

of a family of God. I must have a bigger heart to carry out the second greatest commandment.” – Millennial resident

On independence: “I didn’t know anything about relationships before I moved in, I didn’t know how to have friends, how to know and love people. I was very independent and solitary. Concord House taught me to how to allow people to come into my life and include others.” – Millennial resident

On self-centeredness: “I was an insensitive brute. I didn’t have a sense of anyone else’s feelings. I act impulsively and emotionally in my own self-interest. Concord was the first place I came to realize this about myself.” – Millennial resident

On heartlessness: “I know we are supposed to wash each other’s feet, but when I saw shortcomings in others, I just didn’t want to deal with it. It’s difficult.” – Gen Z resident

On heartlessness: “My natural tendency is to live with the attitude that if I am able to do something, I should just do it. That might be ok, but it’s not always edifying. I learned to be mindful of others.” – Gen Z resident

The remaining categories were egotism and control. All three categories are overlapping, but designations were assigned to reflect distinctions in the nuance of responses. Egotism here refers to a preoccupation with self, resulting in pride, insecurity, resistance to authority, and self-righteousness. Millennial residents comprised the bulk of these responses. Several residents spoke of being “so opinionated” and “always thinking I’m right.” Others spoke of insecurity and the myriad of ways it was expressed in relationships. One millennial shared, “I was so insecure. The smallest thing would anger me.”⁴⁶ The category of control was expressed almost exclusively by Gen X. One Gen Xer reflected, “I moved in thinking my time is my own and my space is my own. It wasn’t possible to live that way at Concord House.”⁴⁷ And another spoke on inflexibility: “I learned to be flexible – when needs arise, it’s not about me, it’s about helping others.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Focus Group Y3, February 17, 2024.

⁴⁷ Focus Group X2, February 13, 2024.

⁴⁸ Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

Mini Case Study 6: “I Saw So Clearly” – Patrick Liu⁴⁹

When I first moved into Concord House, if I were to just do what I naturally wanted all the time, I would have spent my time on my own, just reading books or listening to music or watching something alone. But that just wasn't an option, living together at Concord. I had responsibilities and a life outside of just living for myself, on my own. I didn't learn this primarily through big incidents or events; it was mainly just the fact of living together, a hundred little things in daily life together, that showed me that I couldn't just live my own life apart from others. And through all the times it was difficult, I began to see what a selfish and self-centered person I am at the core.

Especially in the summer, when undergrad guys would stay with us for the summer, some of whom were not as committed to our church, or sometimes not even believers, those were times when all of us had to be mindful to make sure everyone had meals, places to sleep and work, ways to get to where they needed to go – and we had to consider each of the summer guys as an individual, where they were coming from, what they needed, and how they were experiencing things. This is how we showed them the love of God. I myself had experienced that kind of care and love – when I had stayed over the summer, and everyone in the house cleaned everything up for my parents' visit, or when I had a rough day, and people noticed and took me out to eat.

Once, there was a time when many of us were challenged by Dr. Rebekah for falling asleep and not joining a late-night fellowship after a wedding. For context: we were all exhausted after working hard on a rather elaborate presentation for the wedding, to show our love for the brother who was getting married. So afterward, we fell asleep. But many brothers from out of town had come for the wedding and were only visiting for that night, so we only had that rare chance to spend time with them before they went back to the mission field or other parts of the country. For my part, even though people came to call me to hang out for the special occasion, I just didn't have the heart to deny myself (just for a night!) to stay up and spend time with guys who I hadn't seen in a long time and maybe wouldn't see again for another year. On the one hand, maybe it didn't seem like an especially important event; it was just hanging out. But for me, spiritually, it was a very big deal. I saw so clearly that I still was so selfish with my time, not thinking about others, not valuing seeing things from a perspective outside of myself. Can I really say I'm living for God and His purpose if I can't even deny myself a little bit to show love for the precious people that He has placed in my life?

In so many incidents like this, big and small, I was shown over and over again through Concord House that concretely living for God means that my life doesn't just belong to me anymore. It's intertwined with God and the people he has called me to love.

⁴⁹ Patrick Liu, b. 1980 (Gen X), Richmond, VA. A.B. in Linguistics, Harvard College; Ph.D. in Linguistics, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences; M.A.R., Yale Divinity School; M.A. in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Brandeis University. Academic consultant; deacon at Antioch Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

Potential Pitfalls and Risks of a House-based Discipleship Community

After extended discussions delving into the benefits and advantages of Concord House as a house-based discipleship community, focus groups were asked to reflect on the potential pitfalls and risks of discipleship in such a setting. Responses were divided into 9 codes which were grouped into 4 categories (listed from most-cited to least-cited): negative group dynamics, human-centered (not God-centered) relationships, overly activity-oriented, and relational risk. Distribution among categories was consistent across generations.

Table 9. Pitfalls of discipleship in community

	X	Y	Z	Total
Group dynamics	6	15	8	29
Lack of personal conviction	2	5	3	10
False sense of thriving spiritually	2	5	1	8
Lost in group momentum	2	4	2	8
Taking for granted	-	1	2	3
Human-centered	5	4	3	12
People conscious, peer pressure	3	4	3	10
Humanistic relationship only	2	-	-	2
Activity-oriented	2	5	3	10
Martha (Ministry technician) ⁵⁰	2	5	3	10
Risk	0	2	0	2
Pain of broken relationships	-	2	-	2
Total	13	26	14	53

A significant majority of responses were designated to the “group dynamics” category. The advantages of learning to follow Christ in community life can be turned upside down if a member lacks personal conviction, falls into a false sense of spiritual health based on others, gets lost in the momentum of the group, or takes the house and relationships for granted. Focus

⁵⁰ “Martha” and “ministry technician” are terms often used by Dr. Rebekah at Concord House. “Martha” refers to Martha in Luke 10:38-42 who was busy serving Jesus instead of sitting at his feet and listening to his teaching. “Ministry technician” refers to someone who is focused on the activity and technique of ministry rather than ministering as a shepherd, a spiritual leader, or a spiritual father/mother.

groups expressed conscious awareness of these potential pitfalls and many spoke from personal experience. A millennial resident responded, “It’s possible to substitute being present with being a disciple. You can become complacent, thinking that just because you are part of this group you are doing well spiritually.”⁵¹

The second category identifies the risk of human relationships assuming central importance over relationship with God. Residents must fight against the desire to build an image in front of others and avoid the trap of setting relationship with one another as the chief goal, rather than knowing, loving, and obeying Jesus. A Gen X member shared, “There is a risk of losing sight that the point of life together is discipleship, and instead it becomes more about friendship.”⁵² A Gen Z resident reflected, “You can try to impress, trying not to look bad, trying not to be exposed to avoid being trained or corrected.”⁵³ Other descriptive phrases included “people-pleasing,” “performing,” and “conforming.” The third category is closely related: focusing on the activity and service of ministry instead of loving God and one another. Finally, there is an inherent risk when committing to relationships of trust and vulnerability that someone might betray that trust or choose a different path after much investment, both of which have been painfully experienced at Concord House over the years.

Mini Case Study 7: “I Want to Soar, Not Crawl” – Dabin Jang⁵⁴

Last summer, two years after I moved into CCA (Concord Cave of Adullam), I spent two months in Korea with my family and I had a lot of free, independent time. The longer I was there, the lazier I became. Instead of sticking to my DT schedule and prayer, I found myself searching for other ways to occupy my time (spending time with my friends,

⁵¹ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

⁵² Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

⁵³ Focus Group Z1, February 18, 2024.

⁵⁴ Dabin Jang, b. 1996 (Gen Z), Incheon, Korea. B.S. in Computer Engineering, Boston University; M.S. candidate in Cybersecurity, Northeastern University. Volunteer Boston University ministry staff at Antioch Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

watching movies, etc.) rather than spending it with God. I had to struggle with these old habits once I was away from CCA and it made me question whether I was merely maintaining an appearance before people at CCA or really living before God.

This experience humbled me and I realized that even though I am in the safest place for my spiritual life, unless I dedicate quality time to God every day, the spiritual protection and nourishment I receive becomes meaningless. The unique environment we maintain at CCA, which differs from the rest of the world, is the perfect setting for my spiritual life and growth. But it's my personal responsibility to understand and remind myself daily why I choose to live this way and deepen my relationship with God through his word and prayer. As Dr. Rebekah challenges us, I don't want to be a chicken who can only crawl. I want to be an eagle who can soar.⁵⁵

Impact of Concord House on Koinonia-Cross Relationships

Focus groups were asked to share about the role of Concord House in developing their Koinonia-Cross relationships. Responses were divided into 11 codes which were grouped into 5 categories (listed from most cited to least cited): the role of a shepherd, opportunity to put the Koinonia-Cross message into practice, developing peer relationships, relevance for marriage, and relationship to sheep.

⁵⁵ Dr. Rebekah has challenged the Concord House brothers with a vision for spiritual maturity using the comparison between eagles and chickens. Both are birds, but eagles soar in the skies while chickens crawl on the ground. Eaglets are fed and nurtured in the nest until the day they are ready to be pushed out and extend their wings to fly for the first time. Concord House exists to raise eagles, not chickens.

Table 10. Impact on Koinonia Cross

	X	Y	Z	Total
Shepherd	5	9	9	23
Learning from leaders	3	3	6	12
Building relationship with leaders	1	2	3	6
Becoming a leader	1	4	-	5
Practice	6	8	2	16
Allowed to develop/live out KC	6	3	2	11
Living with 3 sides	-	2	-	2
Foundation for continuing KC rest of life	-	2	-	2
Realized need for KC	-	1	-	1
Peer	5	2	5	12
Closer to peers	5	-	5	10
Surrender	-	1	-	1
Being broken together	-	1	-	1
Spouse	5	4	0	9
Marriage	5	4	-	9
Sheep	3	0	6	9
Ministry to sheep	3	-	6	9
Total	24	23	22	69

Responses related to the role of shepherd encompassed learning from leaders, building relationships with leaders, and becoming a leader in the context of the house. For millennials and Gen Z, this category outweighed the others, while Gen X was evenly spread across all categories. A Gen X member witnessed the Koinonia-Cross in Dr. Rebekah's life: "The presence of Dr. Rebekah made all the difference in my understanding of Koinonia-Cross. I could see it in action in her life. Her relationships are 30 layers deeper on each side. Even her marriage is a model for me."⁵⁶ A millennial resident shared about the role of leaders in forming peer relationships: "Because my leader was living in the house, I could complain to him about problems with my roommate (peer) and could be challenged how to love and show grace."⁵⁷ A Gen Z-er said,

⁵⁶ Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

⁵⁷ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

“Living with older brothers and leaders, they are my example. I see how people are supposed to interact and build personal, close relationships, sharing weaknesses and praying for each other.”⁵⁸ Though categorized separately, becoming a leader is closely related to relationship to sheep. Many shared about imitating house leaders by loving and serving more as they became older and through the presence of younger brothers on the weekends and during the summer. One Gen Z resident commented, “I realize how much has been poured out to me by the older brothers. That’s how I should be to my sheep and the weekenders.”⁵⁹

Gen X and millennials in particular spoke about the value of being able to put the Koinonia Cross message into practice at Concord House. As a unique opportunity to live with 3 sides of the Koinonia Cross, Concord was the place where their Koinonia Cross was forged and laid the foundation for continuing to build these relationships even after leaving Concord House. One Gen X member said, “Without Concord House, I would not have a Koinonia-Cross. Period.”⁶⁰ One millennial shared, “I’ve experienced peer, leader, and sheep relationships at Concord. I’ll probably never have another opportunity like this in life. I’ve been able to live out church in daily life.”⁶¹ Another millennial reflected, “I didn’t realize the impact of Concord on my relationships until I moved out. I repented over what I wasted and now everything I’m doing is based on what I witnessed at Concord House.”⁶²

Residents shared strong agreement that Concord House gave them a vision to build close peer relationships through the experience of life together. One Gen X resident shared a story from the earliest days at the house: “We all wanted to be part of the ‘BTR club’ – Bachelors Till

⁵⁸ Focus Group Z1, February 18, 2024.

⁵⁹ Focus Group Z2, February 14, 2024.

⁶⁰ Focus Group X2, February 13, 2024.

⁶¹ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

⁶² Focus Group Y3, February 17, 2024.

Rapture. That much we wanted to stay together, though we all eventually got married.”⁶³ Life together also enables residents to examine the state of their relationships. As one Gen X member said, “If you can’t build relationships even with those you live with, you have a sense of problem. There’s no excuse. It gives a perspective to see yourself better, to understand why you don’t have close relationships.”⁶⁴ A millennial resident shared about the process of growing closer: “My Koinonia-Cross was empty for a while, but now it feels full. After so many years of being spiritually broken together, we could finally be united. I can’t take any credit for that.”⁶⁵

Though Concord House residents are all unmarried men during their time at the house, several shared about the impact of the ministry on their view of marriage. One long-married Gen X member recounted, “What I learned at Concord helped me establish my marriage with a priority for spiritual life and it set a standard not to idolize marriage. Because my future wife was hearing the same teaching in the sisters’ housing, we could have the same expectation for marriage and of each other.”⁶⁶ A recently married millennial member shared, “Living at Concord prepares you for marriage. Spouse and peers are on the same horizontal beam, so certain things are transferrable.”⁶⁷ Another recently married member noted, “Koinonia-Cross relationships at Concord don’t disappear after you move out. Even in marriage, those relationships support me. I need help.”⁶⁸

⁶³ Focus Group X2, February 13, 2024.

⁶⁴ Focus Group X2, February 13, 2024.

⁶⁵ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

⁶⁶ Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

⁶⁷ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

⁶⁸ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

Mini Case Study 8: “Learning to Stick Together” – Timothy Wong⁶⁹

Concord House greatly influenced all 4 sides of my Koinonia Cross. In college, before I moved into Concord House, one of my dreams was to have a group of friends who’d be like brothers and always stick together to do great things. I had a group of non-Christian friends who aspired to be like this, but at the end of college, we parted ways, as most friend groups do after college. However, moving into Concord House I found a group of brothers who actually did stick together, through a commitment to spiritual discipleship. I hadn’t imagined that my dream would be answered in this way, but God indeed fulfilled it.

It was also a rare time to live together with my leaders at church – I lived at Concord with brothers who later became our two college pastors and all the college deacons. Meeting up with spiritual leaders for dinner or coffee is one thing; actually living together is another level of getting to know and rely on each other. Living together also taught me how to be an older brother. I roomed with one younger brother who snored so loudly I had to wear earplugs every night, and still I was woken up in the middle of most nights. In the long run, though, this strengthened our bond. As I had endured his worst snoring, he knew he could trust and rely on me, and our relationship is still close even after he moved to a sister church.

As for affecting my relationship with my future wife, I would say Concord House most helped by emphasizing the need to be a spiritual leader in our marriage. I was able to share from what I learned and experienced having been trained for many years at Concord House to establish a vision for our household and to provide support and encouragement for my wife on the same path of discipleship.

Concord House shaped for me what a Christ-centered group of relationships should be like. That is the goal of Christian life. Struggling together to live for Christ. Sharing life together in ways that break down barriers. I will carry these relationships and that standard with me for the rest of my life.

A Snapshot of the “Abbots” of Concord House

Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah were mentioned repeatedly throughout the focus groups, but one question was dedicated specifically to reflecting on their role at Concord House. Knowing that a full description would be difficult for residents, focus groups were asked to share words or short phrases that came to mind when thinking of Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah in relation to

⁶⁹ Timothy Wong, b. 1982 (Gen Y), Summit, NJ. A.B. in Earth and Planetary Sciences, Harvard College; M.L.A., Harvard Graduate School of Design. Landscape architect; volunteer Tufts ministry staff at Antioch Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

Concord House ministry. Responses were divided into 18 codes which were grouped into 5 categories (listed from most cited to least cited): embodying spiritual maturity, demonstrating love, admonishing Concord brothers, providing spiritual leadership, unifying the community, and equipping the community.

Table 11. Roles of Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah

	X	Y	Z	Total
Embodying	10	19	9	38
Role model, example	4	11	4	19
Faithful and enduring	4	4	2	10
Wise	-	2	1	3
Encourager	1	-	1	2
Apostle Paul	1	-	1	2
Prayer warriors	-	2	-	2
Loving	12	12	5	29
Spiritual parents	7	4	3	14
Love	5	2	2	9
Importance of one person	-	6	-	6
Admonishing	4	8	2	14
Correction of sin	3	3	2	8
Discipler	1	5	-	6
Leading	5	7	1	13
Commander in Chief	1	4	1	6
Spiritual vision	3	2	-	5
Shepherd	1	1	-	2
Unifying	0	8	4	12
Sharing life	-	6	2	8
Game Queen	-	2	2	4
Equipping	2	8	2	12
Teaching word of God	1	7	2	10
Teaching history	1	1	-	2
Total	33	62	23	118

Notably, the most common responses referenced how Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah embodied spiritual maturity, ranking above responses regarding their specific responsibilities or

activities. This kind of firsthand observation of their lives is much more possible in the context of life together. “Role model” and “lead by example” were repeatedly mentioned. One Gen Y resident reflected, “They are just Christ-like role models. The standard. Always ahead of us. I never cease to be amazed at their heart. The more I know them, the more I realize I have no idea of the depth of their relationship with God.”⁷⁰ Though they are now in their mid-70s, they are “faithful and enduring” and several commented on Dr. Rebekah’s “boundless energy” and ability to connect across generations, demonstrated in her ability and willingness even now to fellowship and play games late into the night with college students.

The second category of responses, significantly more common than the remaining described the love demonstrated by Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah. Many referred to them as “spiritual parents” who concretely practiced love for them and others. One millennial said, “They are spiritual tiger parents,” a sentiment echoed by others.⁷¹ A Gen X resident shared, “They are more than teachers. They are parents who feed us even physically, and they know and care about the details of our lives.”⁷² Dr. Rebekah’s mantra of “the importance of one person” was specifically mentioned as a principle of love that was reinforced in word and deed. For Gen X, “spiritual parents” was the most-cited code while for millennials and Gen Z, it was “role model/example.” This might reflect a shift in emphasis and language over time at Concord House.

The remaining categories summarize the roles of Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah in discipline and dealing with sin, providing clear spiritual leadership with vision and decision-making, fostering unity through fellowship, and equipping the brothers by teaching both the Bible and

⁷⁰ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

⁷¹ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

⁷² Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

history. In discussion, it was clear there was a shared vocabulary to describe these roles, such as “spiritual surgeon,” “commander-in-chief,” and “game queen.” Older members reminisced about Grandma Ho Re (Dr. Rebekah’s mother) and her impact in making Concord House a home with her open kitchen, witty humor, and warm heart. Current residents spoke about the frequent Concord “garden” gatherings led by Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah during the Covid-19 pandemic to study the Bible, share meals, play games, mark special occasions, and welcome visitors. Formal opportunities for teaching and equipping certainly abounded, but many noted that Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah always interweave lessons from the word of God and history. One of Dr. Rebekah’s favorite catchphrases is “history humbles you” and she makes a concerted effort to teach and pass down the histories of the people of God, our nation, and our church to remind younger generations of the sacrifice and suffering that make their lives possible.

Mini Case Study 9: “In Public and in Private” – Christopher Im⁷³

As I observe Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah’s day-to-day lives at Concord House, it has given me a greater appreciation of how they live just as intensely for the Lord at home as they do in public. One aspect that I want to highlight is Dr. Rebekah’s life motto and mission to treat the person in front of you as the most important person in the world - embodying how Christ loves each one of us. As much as she practices this in public, it’s even more apparent at home. When she’s home, she does not sleep! Because our church spans time zones around the globe, she’s usually awake when most of us are in bed. She prays into the night and early morning, constantly giving counsel to our church members on the other side of the world.

One night, I was woken up by her because she found out that my grandmother, a longtime member of our church, had passed away in Korea after a long bout with dementia. She was up all night getting updates and praying for my grandmother until my grandmother’s final breath and was the first one to let me know the sad news.

Dr. Rebekah has been there for every Concord Brother (and church member) and all our extended family members, whether they are going through a health crisis or spiritual

⁷³ Christopher Im, b. 1991 (Gen Y), Walnut Creek, CA. B.A. in Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles. Senior revenue operations manager; volunteer Brandeis ministry staff at Antioch Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

crisis. Both Drs. Paul and Rebekah know our families, what they are doing, and how to pray for their physical and spiritual needs. It certainly takes intelligence to remember all of this, but it has more to do with their heart for each one of us than anything else.

I will never forget that night after hearing from her that my grandmother passed away when she mobilized the whole house to come to the basement fellowship hall and pray for me and my family. As I see them live their everyday lives both in public and at home, I see lives of intensity and consistency, sacrificing and caring for each one of us as if we were their own children, showing me what it means to be part of the family of God bound together by the love of God.

How Concord House Forms a Vision for Ministry

The final focus group question asked participants to reflect on the role of Concord House in forming their own vision for a life of ministry. Responses were divided into 11 codes which were grouped into 4 categories (listed from most cited to least cited): served as an exemplar, demonstrated love, explicitly cast a vision, and provided a context for the practice of ministry. Responses were fairly evenly distributed across generations.

Table 12. Forming missional vision

	X	Y	Z	Total
Exemplar	11	28	13	52
Examples to imitate	5	21	12	38
Normal Christian life	3	2	1	6
Worthy life	2	3	-	5
There is no other way	1	2	-	3
Love	2	14	8	24
Received so much	2	5	3	10
What it means to love others	-	5	3	8
Importance of one soul	-	4	2	6
Vision	3	8	7	18
Vision of church	2	4	5	11
Baton passing	1	4	2	7
Practice	7	7	3	17
Training	4	5	2	11
Practicing ministry at Concord	3	2	1	6
Total	23	57	31	111

Almost half of all responses pointed to Concord House as an exemplar for residents when envisioning a life of ministry. Discussion revolved around Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah as the standard, the older brothers living at the house, and former residents now serving in ministry. There was a collective sense of identity and legacy as a “Concord House Brother” and an accompanying expectation to live a “worthy life” because “there is no other way.”⁷⁴ Life and ministry experienced at Concord House set the standard for a “normal Christian life” for residents.⁷⁵ One Gen X member reflected, “I never imagined being a pastor. Concord House shaped our view of what it meant to be a pastor. Ministry just became a part of our normal life.”⁷⁶ Another Gen X resident said his vision was formed by “seeing a generation of older brothers who were capable of many things but gave up opportunities to give their lives selflessly for students. And we’re still seeing that passed down today.”⁷⁷ A millennial resident pointed to Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah: “Watching them, they are living a worthy life. Comparing it to the world, I realize what is important – to live for God’s word and human souls. There is no other way to live life. I should strive for that purpose, not for my own purpose or for the world.”⁷⁸

Several shared the sentiment of being encouraged and enabled to live a life of ministry because they are not alone. As one millennial put it: “Before Concord House, didn’t know if it was possible to live for God, a regular person like me. The fact that everyone is committed to live for Him and put His church first, seeing the reality of following God, seeing it really is possible.... This has become the defining structure of my life.”⁷⁹ A Gen Z resident shared a similar reflection: “It can be discouraging to see Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah, they are so ahead of

⁷⁴ “Worthy life” and “there is no other way” are phrases taken from the song “Worthy Life” composed by church members in celebration of the 15th anniversary of Berkland Baptist Church.

⁷⁵ “Normal Christian life” is taken from a book authored by Watchman Nee bearing that name.

⁷⁶ Focus Group X1, February 13, 2024.

⁷⁷ Focus Group X2, February 13, 2024.

⁷⁸ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

⁷⁹ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

me. But then I'm encouraged to see the lineage, the Via Egnatia. It's not impossible even for a sinner like me to grow step by step, seeing everyone in between me and them.”⁸⁰

The theme of love centered around receiving love and learning how to love. Many expressed a sense of indebtedness and wanting to give back as they received. One Gen X member shared, “Being a recipient of God’s grace and love through Dr. Paul, Dr. Rebekah, the older brothers – I feel compelled to live a life worthy. As much as I received, much will be asked. I should pour out as everyone else did for me.”⁸¹ One millennial spoke of his motivation to continue even when following Jesus is not easy: “In terms of ministry, I always go back to what I received at Concord House. I look back, what I put people through, and how patient they were. When there is something difficult, I always remember where I came from. Without Concord House, I would not be here.”⁸² Through the example of the Kims and through struggling for each other, many learned what it means to love another person. One millennial said, “I learned to suffer together, to carry the mat for a fellow brother, to do it together.”⁸³

As presented in question 2, a vision for a future of ministry is embedded in the vision of the house to “raise leaders for the 21st century.” That vision is regularly articulated in house life and embodied by former residents now serving in ministry. One millennial said, “Concord House shows me our vision for what church should be. Concord is the epitome of what church is. It’s what God wants us to pass down to the next generation.”⁸⁴ A Gen Z resident shared similarly: “Getting trained and disciplined, learning what it means to be the family of God – this is how I want to live, experiencing that family, rather than just being a preacher. I want to build the family

⁸⁰ Focus Group Z2, February 14, 2024.

⁸¹ Focus Group X2, February 13, 2024.

⁸² Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024.

⁸³ Focus Group Y1, February 14, 2024; “Carry the mat” is a reference to Mark 2:1-12 and the account of four friends who carried a paralytic on a mat to be healed by Jesus.

⁸⁴ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

of God.”⁸⁵ In discussion, that vision seamlessly translated to a vision for the entire network of sister churches, extending beyond a vision for Concord House or ministry in Boston. A millennial shared, “Living at Concord House, because of the Kakao prayer chatroom, we get a worldwide view, plus meeting all the visitors who come to Concord – it makes me think about when is the right time to become a missionary.”⁸⁶

That vision for a life of ministry is not merely one to pursue in an unknown and undefined future. It is a vision that Concord House brothers begin putting into practice while living at Concord. Even the youngest, newest members of the house are invited into a life of ministry to the weekenders and summer residents. House residents live with a sense of going out to their campuses and workplaces as missionaries and they invite others to “come and see” God at work in the *koinonia* at Concord.⁸⁷ One Gen Z resident reflected, “Seeing the older guys who live here shows that it’s possible to live a life of ministry. It’s not easy, but seeing it’s God’s expectation for me, it’s motivating. Your heart for ministry grows the more you practice it. You go deeper and deeper. And Concord is the training ground.”⁸⁸

Mini Case Study 10: “Inversion of Priorities” – Wesley Block⁸⁹

Concord House puts mission in the center of life. As Dr. Rebekah says, “Should everyone become a pastor or a missionary? Why not?” It’s true. We are all on mission right now. Concord makes possible an inversion of priorities at our stage of life. While my friends are focused on career, ambitions – those things fall to the wayside behind our God-given mission when you live at Concord House. I can see the long-term fruit of that early inversion in the lives of the older brothers, pastors, and missionaries ahead of me. And I want that kind of life.

⁸⁵ Focus Group Z1, February 18, 2024.

⁸⁶ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

⁸⁷ “Come and see” is a reference to Jesus’ invitation when he called two disciples in John 1:39.

⁸⁸ Focus Group Z2, February 14, 2024.

⁸⁹ Wesley Block, b. 2000 (Gen Z), Philadelphia, PA. S.B. in Materials Science & Engineering and Mathematics, M.I.T. Tech start-up founder; volunteer MIT ministry staff at Antioch Baptist Church. Name and biographical information used by permission.

Summary of Questionnaire Data

Following the completion of the focus groups, a questionnaire was developed and sent to focus group participants to provide anonymous supplemental information. All 51 focus group participants submitted the questionnaire. A subset of data from both questionnaires is presented here.⁹⁰

Demonstrating Fruitfulness in Concord House Ministry

While this project assumes the fruitfulness of Concord House ministry, it is valuable to demonstrate that fruitfulness even in limited ways. The earlier demographic survey provides a few relevant data points. Excluding Concord brothers who grew up as children in the church (16 out of 56), the average number of years at Antioch (or a sister church) before moving into Concord House is 3.6 years while the current average length of tenure at Antioch (or a sister church) is 17.3 years (with a median length of 16 years). This means Concord House brothers who have remained at Antioch have an average continuing presence at the church of 14 years after moving in. In this era of uber-mobility among young adults, it is remarkable to note the stability of this community.

While only 37% of brothers were serving in a volunteer ministry role upon moving into the house, 87% currently serve in some ministry role (including 9% pastors, 15% deacons, and 64% volunteer staff). A sizeable percentage of house residents take on some kind of ministry role at some point after joining the community.

The following questions were included in the second questionnaire to provide other data points demonstrating the fruitfulness of Concord House ministry.

⁹⁰ A more complete dataset is provided in the Appendix.

Table 13. Which option most closely resembles your mindset when you moved into Concord House?

Mindset on entry	X	Y	Z	Total
I want to be spiritually trained to love and serve God and His church.	6	6	7	19
I'm trusting others that Concord will be good for my spiritual life.	1	9	6	16
I want to live with other Christians (and be set apart from campus culture).	2	4	3	9
Concord House seems like a fun and meaningful place to live.	-	5	1	6
I have a (desperate) need that Concord House will help me with.	-	1	-	1
Total	9	25	17	51

Table 14. How would you describe your personal desire and willingness (not readiness) to serve in spiritual leadership, such as becoming a campus director, going to seminary, or becoming a long-term missionary?

Desire and willingness to serve in spiritual leadership	X	Y	Z	Total
I am willing whenever leaders/peers think I am ready (or I already am).	9	18	7	34
I am willing but I can't imagine that within the next 10 years.	-	5	5	10
I don't have personal desire for that but would seriously pray if suggested.	-	1	4	5
I don't see that in my future, but I am willing to serve in other ways.	-	1	1	2
Total	9	25	17	51

Table 15. Which best describes your current commitment to our church?

Commitment to church	X	Y	Z	Total
I foresee spending the rest of my life with this church unless God clearly calls me elsewhere.	9	21	11	41
I plan to remain at this church, but it's hard to imagine what my life will be like in 10 or 20 years.	-	3	4	7
I'm grateful to be here and will remain as long as life circumstances don't lead me elsewhere.	-		2	2
I'm grateful to be here for now, but I'm still figuring out how God is leading my life.	-	1		1
Total	9	25	17	51

Taken together, these datasets paint a picture of a group of brothers who entered Concord House with a varied set of motivations and expectations. 37% had a desire for spiritual training to serve God and the church, while 63% joined for other reasons. Through the experience of Concord House and other ministries at the church, 86% are now willing to serve in roles of spiritual leadership now or in the future and 80% foresee spending the rest of their lives with this church unless God calls elsewhere. Such commitment almost seems out of place today yet reflects an understanding of the value of stability.

Clarifying the Vision to “Raise Leaders”

The most cited vision of Concord House is "raising leaders" or “leadership training.” Concord House members were asked to clarify this vision by finishing this sentence (free response): "Concord House is raising leaders who...."

Table 16. Raise leaders who...

Raise leaders who...	
Make disciples	22
Take up the cross	16
Love	16
Pass the baton	8
Build the church	6
Prepare for Jesus’ return	3
Humble	2
Serve God	2
Bear fruit	2
Pastors and missionaries	2
Total	79

Three key themes rose to the top. The most cited response was “make disciples” which included witnessing and sharing the Gospel. The next two themes were “take up the cross” and

“love” God and others. Tying these together, Concord House ministry seeks to raise leaders who will make disciples by taking up the cross and loving God and others. Making disciples is the fruit born of a cross-bearing life of loving God and loving one another.

Primary Sources of Spiritual Transformation

Focus groups discussed areas of personal discipleship/transformation and elements of community life that contributed to that process. In follow-up, the questionnaire attempted to identify the instruments God used to bring about spiritual change among house residents.

Questionnaire participants were asked to identify the source of the two most significant spiritual markers (spiritually transformative experiences) during their time at Concord House.

Table 17. Source of spiritual markers

Source of spiritual markers (2 per participant)	X	Y	Z	Total
Direct correction from house leaders	8	18	9	35
Personal struggle or circumstance where Concord provided support	3	12	8	23
Conflict with a peer	4	8	3	15
House retreat or trip	2	3	4	9
Specific Bible message delivered at Concord	1	3	5	9
Someone else being directly corrected by house leaders	-	3	2	5
Other	-	3	1	4
Answered prayer at Concord House	-	-	2	2
Conviction from personal prayer or personal Bible study	-	1	1	2
Total	18	51	35	104

Again, three areas rose to the top. The definitive most-cited source of spiritually transformative experience was direct correction from house leaders. This coincides with the experiences of discipleship described in the focus groups. Wrestling with sin by experiencing house life as a mirror and being trained together; learning to love others by having a heart for

others and seeing one's selfishness and self-centeredness; grappling with individualism and egotism – all of these require the wisdom, insight, and authority of a spiritual leader. They are rarely discerned all by oneself.

This data echoes a similar finding by Dr. David Um (Senior Pastor, Antioch Baptist Church) in his Doctor of Ministry thesis. Dr. David created an evaluation tool – the “Metanoia Matrix” – to determine the relative weight of personal influencers in discipleship at Antioch Baptist Church. Across 7 categories of spiritual disciplines, the “direct shepherd” was the single most influential person in shaping the disciple.⁹¹

The second and third most cited sources were a personal struggle where Concord House provided support and a conflict with a peer. These point to the importance of the whole community and peer relationships as the context through which God accomplishes the work of transformation and discipleship, whether through encouragement or through strife.

Generational Traits and Spiritual Transformation

Based upon the generational sketch developed in Chapter 1, one questionnaire item was designed to determine whether each generation wrestled with its own generational characteristics on a scale distinguishable from other generations. Participants were asked to choose from a list the two personal traits most transformed by life at Concord House. The list of traits includes 3 prominent features of each generation (generation noted in parentheses).

⁹¹ David Um, *Developing a Unified Disciple-Making Strategy for Antioch Baptist Church to Reach College Students in Boston, Massachusetts* (D.Min. thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022), 147.

Table 18. Traits most transformed

Traits most transformed	X	Y	Z	Total
Independence and self-reliance (Y)	6	11	7	24
Self-confidence and pride (X)	6	15	3	24
Lack of personal spiritual disciplines (Z)	1	5	8	14
Lack of trust for others (X)	1	4	5	10
Online/digital practices (Z)	-	3	5	8
Fear of taking risks (Z)	-	5	3	8
Lack of vision for my life (Y)	2	3	2	7
Ambition (X)	2	2	1	5
Mental health challenges (Y)	-	2	-	2
Total	18	50	34	102

“Independence and self-reliance (Y)” ranked as first or second for all groups. This is a strong characteristic of Gen X and millennials and as noted in Q6 from the focus groups, community life challenged this trait across the board. It is not surprising that “self-confidence and pride (X)” was first for both Gen X and millennials while low for Gen Z, given the similarities between the two older generations. It is notable that while only 2 people indicated “mental health challenges (Y),” both were millennials, matching the generational profile. Gen Z ranked highest among the generations for lack of “personal spiritual disciplines (Z)” and “online/digital practices (Z).” These match expectations, given that Gen Z is the least religious generation and the first to be digital natives. “Lack of trust for others (X)” is a trait of Gen X but scored highest with Gen Z, perhaps a reflection of their search for “authenticity.”

Relative Impact of Concord House Among Other Spiritual Influences

While Concord House is an important ministry within Antioch Baptist Church, it is only one of many sources of spiritual influence for those who live at Concord. Moreover, Concord House is rarely anyone’s first introduction to the church. One questionnaire item was designed to

assess the relative impact of Concord House ministry among other spiritual influences, including other ministries at Antioch. Participants were asked to rank the importance of these ongoing ministries in their spiritual formation and discipleship during their first 10 years (or less) at Antioch.

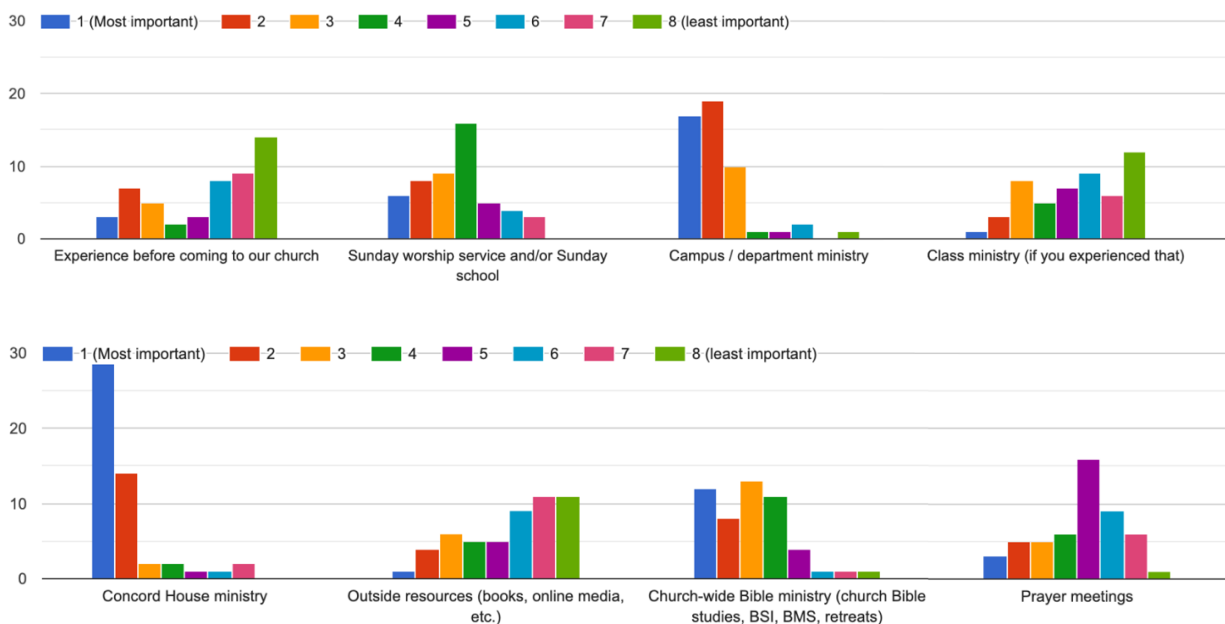


Figure 15. Ranking spiritual influences during the first ten (or fewer) years at Antioch

Concord House outranked the impact of other ministries with campus/departmental ministry a notable second. Most respondents (56%) ranked Concord House as the most important influence and 84% ranked Concord as first or second. 33% ranked campus/departmental ministry as the most important and 71% ranked campus/departmental as first or second. Given Antioch's focus on campus ministry, most Concord House members initially experienced the church through a campus Bible study, but over time, Concord House typically became the central place for formational discipleship. The two ministries seamlessly work together as almost all brother leaders in campus/departmental ministry are current or former residents of Concord House.

A Tapestry of Stories

Through a process of focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, and testimonies, I have attempted to unveil the tapestry that God has woven over the past 30 years drawing together the individual strands of each life story represented in this oral history. Represented here is a group of men who are bound to one another with a shared desire to love and obey Jesus; a common vision for life together; and a humble dependence on trust relationships centered in Christ. The resonance with the examples in chapters 2 and 3 are undeniable and now we turn to a closer analysis of the tapestry that has emerged for insights and lessons.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSION: MAKING DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS – ONE RELATIONSHIP AND ONE HOUSE AT A TIME

Following in the Footsteps

In January 2024, Concord House Brothers Ministry celebrated our 30th anniversary year with a 10-day trip to Greece and Italy, following in the footsteps of Apostle Paul through Neapolis, Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea, Corinth, Athens, and Rome with an added side trip to Florence to see a few notable works of art. Dr. Rebekah led the trip, joined by 56 Concord House Brothers and 38 participants from Antioch and other churches in the network. One year earlier, we had planned this celebration as a trip to Israel, but those plans vanished when Hamas invaded Israel on October 7, 2023. Dr. Rebekah made a quick decision to pivot our trip to Greece and Italy and three months later, we embarked on an unforgettable 10-day pilgrimage through the life, letters, and martyrdom of Apostle Paul and the early church.

In hindsight, there was no more fitting way to celebrate 30 years of Concord House Brothers Ministry than to relive the Book of Acts, the very text that inspired that first group to live together, following in the footsteps of the early church. In addition to precious fellowship sharing memories and building new ones, God renewed our vision and imprinted his message on our hearts through what we saw and heard during the trip. I will draw upon those messages and moments from Greece and Italy throughout this final chapter.

A Picture Emerges

Assembling all the data presented in Chapter 4, a picture begins to emerge, enabling us to examine the key question and test the hypothesis set forward in Chapter 1. Recall our project question: how has a house-based discipleship community in Cambridge, MA, consistently and effectively trained college students and young adults over the past 30 years to become missional leaders? Our hypothesis: Living-in-community discipleship is an effective model for raising future leaders across generations because it is an ideal setting to foster Koinonia Cross relationships. So we are left with this question: is forming Koinonia Cross relationships the central means by which living-in-community discipleship at Concord House raises ministry leaders across generations?

Two sets of reference points will be used to analyze the data from Chapter 4 as we consider our project question and hypothesis. Firstly, the characteristics of Concord House will be compared against the 6 common factors of historical discipleship communities discussed in the conclusion to chapter 3. Secondly, the accounts of Concord House Brothers will be compared to the perspectives of Concord House “abbots” – Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah – as attained through a semi-structured interview.¹

Concord House and the Lineage of Discipleship Communities

The first common factor of historical discipleship communities is a vision centered on loving God with all their heart, soul, and mind. As described in Chapter 4, Concord House residents understand their primary vision as “raising leaders” who will “make disciples by taking up the cross and loving God and others.” Concord House interweaves being a disciple (“take up

¹ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

the cross”) with the two great commandments (“love God” and “love one another”) and the great commission (“make disciples of all nations”). Success for Concord House is to raise a leader who denies himself daily to love God and love others and as a result, makes disciples who do the same. Perhaps the vision could have been stated merely as “raising disciples” but explicitly articulating a vision of leadership communicates an expectation that those who are trained at Concord House should go on to raise others who will raise others who will raise others, and so on. Every Concord Brother is acutely aware of their responsibility to “pass the baton” to the next generation by investing in the lives of those who are coming behind them, faithfully replicating what they have seen and heard.

The second common factor of historical discipleship communities is a profound understanding of grace as the ground of obedience. Throughout the focus groups, a shared experience of grace was an underlying current carrying every conversation and comment, visible in the words spoken and the tears shed. That shared experience was rooted in seeing oneself more clearly through the “mirror” of relationships at Concord. As each brother comes to wrestle with his sinfulness, repent at the foot of the cross, and receive love, forgiveness, and commitment from others, he is moved from a place of entitlement and complacency to one of unworthiness, grace, and gratitude. And from this place, loving and obeying God is not an obligation but a desire, for “his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:2-3). This movement from entitlement to grace requires the disruption created by spiritual leaders and peers committed to being a spiritual mirror and becomes the reason many choose to stay.

The third common factor is a regard for *koinonia* as *central* to the task of formational discipleship and faithfulness to the greatest commandment. It is not possible to overstate the centrality of *koinonia* at Concord to the process of formational discipleship in almost every

house resident, as evidenced by its top ranking in importance among spiritual influences. While Concord House and many monastic communities share value for a “vow of stability,” Concord House Brothers come to see commitment not merely as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. They are not just a set of Christ-followers who joined a living community because they share the same goal of loving God. Being bound together is the very way of loving God and following Christ. The goal is not only personal faithfulness but fulfilling God’s whole purpose in the world through the church. This was Jesus’ final prayer for his disciples throughout time, even us: “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20-21). Concord House’s identity is closely intertwined with its place within the church as the body of Christ and the family of God. As such, Concord House understands the deep connection between following Jesus and the commitment to one another. The *oikonomia* (plan or economy) of the mystery of God is made known through the church: the mystery that all people can become heirs of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (Eph 3:6, 9-10). The more we embody unity in the church, the more powerfully we bear witness to the mystery that all people can be grafted into the line of God’s people through the gospel.

Unity through stability does not undermine the mission of the church to fulfill the great commission. It enables it. In the case of Concord House and Antioch Baptist Church, unity and stability do not mean remaining in one geographical location. What remains stable is the commitment to one’s Koinonia Cross relationships regardless of physical location. The unity and stability of Koinonia Cross relationships make these relationships an ideal core to send out as a church planting team. A team of committed relationships is a more effective – and arguably

superior – means of church planting than a lone missionary and his/her family.² And when a call to mission means physically separating from part of one's Koinonia Cross, those relationships endure and continue to be the context for the two great commandments, even as new relationships form in the context of mission.

The fourth common factor is a distillation of vision into a shared commitment to an everyday “way of life.” The explicit and implicit practices at Concord House around worship, common life, relationship, and work closely mirror the Rules of other formational discipleship communities. They provide the structure enabling the house to concretely pursue the vision of discipleship and life together and are seamlessly integrated into the vision. No house practice is purposeless.

The fifth common factor is the necessity of the calling and commitment of an abbot or spiritual leader. Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah undoubtedly play a role reminiscent of the spiritual leaders profiled in chapter 3. As cited by many brothers, the potent combination of their complete surrender to God, wholehearted and sacrificial love for members of the house, and Spirit-filled teaching and training has earned them the love, trust, and respect of every brother. Many brothers also cited the importance of older spiritual brothers in the house and those who went on to become pastors, missionaries, and deacons. The entire community is moving together in the same direction, following Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah as they follow Christ. While Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah serve in the role of spiritual leaders at Concord House, they each have their own Koinonia Cross relationships with shepherds and peers, in addition to sheep. And in their leadership of Concord House and Antioch Baptist Church, they have always relied upon a team

² Paul Kim, “Developing a Team Approach to Local Church Planting within the University Community in Tokyo, Japan” (D.Min. thesis, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000), 81.

of co-leaders and co-laborers who partner together, seeking consensus and clarity of direction from the word of God and the Spirit.

One stop during the 30th anniversary trip to Greece and Italy was at the ancient ruins of Philippi. We took a photo on a remarkably preserved stretch of huge, flat stones comprising the Via Egnatia, the Roman road Apostle Paul must have used when he stayed in Philippi. We stood in a single file line in the order of our entry to Concord House, beginning with Dr. Rebekah and ending with the newest resident. Every single link in that chain is critical, connecting what went before to what comes behind. It was a powerful visual reminder to all of us of the unbroken chain of God's faithfulness from Adam to Abraham to David to Jesus to Apostle Paul to many saints and martyrs across history, and eventually to Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah to each of us. It was a spiritual genealogy as real as any physical one.

The sixth and final common factor is a mission to their neighboring enclaves and the wider world, in preparation to enter the eternal home of their heavenly Father. Awareness of mission is embedded into the fabric of Concord House. The vision is to raise leaders who will serve God's mission in the world. And that mission begins with younger brothers who live in the house, weekenders and summer residents, and those in need who enter for rescue from the travails of life. Concord House Brothers are embedded in that mission vision from the moment they move in. They witness it from afar. They receive from it. They join in it. And they pass it on.

On Vision

How does the account provided by Concord House Brothers compare with that of Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah? The Abbots of Concord echo the same core vision articulated by Concord Brothers: “Our church vision was to raise leaders for the 21st century. Concord House is a small-scale version within the larger scale of our entire church.”³ Dr. Paul notes that the vision had begun 10 years before Concord House through discipleship and evangelism with students at the University of California, Berkeley, but the move to Cambridge and the purchase of the duplex on Concord Avenue brought the new opportunity of a house-based discipleship community. Dr. Rebekah recalls, “I heard about ‘in-house training’ from the Navigators a long time ago. I had always wanted that, but we didn’t have that kind of home until coming to Cambridge. It was God’s time to begin house-based discipleship training.”⁴

The Kims had considered inviting a staff family to move in upstairs; it would have been easier to co-work together and less burdensome with a trusted family. But they realized younger, unmarried church members were more available, moldable, and even teachable before they added the complexities of a spouse, children, in-laws, and full-time jobs. The value of discipleship training at this stage of life was evident in the focus groups that included Concord Brothers who are now married. Many described the ongoing influence of the foundation and framework of spiritual life established during their years of training at Concord House before marriage.

³ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

⁴ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

The vision to “raise leaders” also informed the Kims’ decision to focus Concord House Ministry on discipleship for young men. The Kims have always believed in the importance of female leadership in the church, as evidenced by Dr. Rebekah’s prominent role as a Bible teacher, discipler, and visionary, and the strong role of women in leadership throughout the church, particularly in teaching and discipling other women. But the Kims also believe for biblical and cultural reasons (particularly in an Asian and Asian-American context) that men should be the ordained ministers who plant churches and serve as lead pastors. Moreover, the Bible calls men to be the head of their households. The Kims chose to devote their home to disciple and discipline young men while other women leaders took charge of discipling young women in house communities for sisters.

On the Connection Between Life Together, Formational Discipleship, and Koinonia Cross

What is the connection between life together, formational discipleship, and Koinonia Cross relationships? Dr. Rebekah focuses on the importance of knowing and loving one another in the process of discipleship.

There is a Korean saying: until you cross a river, you’ll never know how deep it is. Likewise, unless you live with someone, you don’t know what kind of person he is. When you live together, everything is exposed and you have to face the reality of who you are, who your brother is, and learn to truly love one another as Christ loved us. It’s easy to say ‘I love you’ or ‘I want to serve you’ when you don’t know that person. Everyone can be nice for a while, but living together is different.⁵

This is what makes the love of Christ so amazing: he knows our every deed and every thought and yet he still loved us to the point of laying down his life for us. As Apostle Paul wrote in Rom 5:7-8: “For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one

⁵ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

would dare even to die – but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” To love one another as Jesus loved us requires that we first know one another. Then we realize just how unloving, selfish, and self-preserving we are, and we begin to truly understand the love of Christ for us. It is impossible for one sinner to love another unless we first experience the unconditional, eternal love of God. Dr. Rebekah succinctly summarized what all the brothers conveyed through their personal experiences living together, coming to know themselves, learning to love another person, and ultimately experiencing more deeply the love of Christ.

Dr. Paul points out this is not a new idea. It’s exactly how Jesus trained his first disciples for 3 years. “These men, all from different backgrounds, came and lived together with Jesus and one another, spending time with the Word, and were made into disciples who changed the world.”⁶ Lifelong brotherhood forged by a common mission is powerful, like a “band of brothers” in the military. Dr. Rebekah recognizes the same vision displayed by Bonhoeffer in *Life Together*. “While Bonhoeffer’s time with Finkenwalde was so limited, it’s a privilege that we have been able to keep going for 30 years.”⁷

Life together and unity in Christ is no romantic ideal. It’s a gritty, often painful process of sinners being broken and remade into the body of Christ. Dr. Rebekah compares it to making mashed potatoes: “A bunch of raw, individual potatoes must be washed, peeled, boiled, and mashed to become one. Through that process, real discipleship and real disciples are possible.”⁸ The Concord Brothers’ accounts of spiritual turning points most often came through the painful

⁶ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

⁷ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

⁸ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

and difficult experiences of correction and conflict, and less often through high-water mark moments.

On the Long-term Fruitfulness of Concord House

Why has Concord House been so fruitful for so long? Dr. Paul readily points to the role of the older brothers in the house. “They set the tone. If upstream is clear, then downstream is clear too. Dan, you were the ringleader who brought the first group to Concord House and you set the tone until the time you got married and moved out.”⁹ The Kims regard the first generation of Concord Brothers, which includes me and Pastor Joshua Kondo, as critical in setting an example and establishing a tradition. Dr. Rebekah describes the importance of that first group in sustaining Concord House Ministry through the years:

We should talk about sustainability. Many efforts fail because the initiator doesn’t remain. In that sense our church and Concord House Ministry are parallel. Pastor Andy and you – our first disciple from Berkeley and our first Concord Brother – you were determined to stay. To build a snowman, you start with a small fist-sized snowball and then you just roll it and it gets bigger and bigger. That’s how the Holy Spirit worked in our church. When a handful stay committed to the work of God and to one another, with the attitude of being together for a lifetime, one by one others follow. The first group is important. In many cases, the first group doesn’t stay because they are too egotistic, too ambitious, and they have different spiritual dreams. Then the kind of ministry we are experiencing is not possible. But Pastor Paul and I are still here, and you are still here. We shouldn’t take that for granted.¹⁰

The second key to the sustainability of Concord House Ministry is again raising leaders who share the love for God and his church, the vision for Concord House, and the commitment to continue what God has begun through Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah. Toward that end, Dr. Rebekah has intentionally involved me in the ongoing leadership of Concord House even though

⁹ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

¹⁰ Interview with Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim, February 19, 2024.

I am no longer living there, a privilege I take with great seriousness. And I in turn have invested in training and discipling the next generation leader, Philip Kim (who also happens to be Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah's son) since the time I led him to Christ as a freshman at Harvard. We are hopeful that among the newest residents, there are future leaders who will continue in their generation as well. Dr. Rebekah is mindful that there should not be any "dilution" of our training or discipling as she envisions what God will do through another 30 years of Concord House Ministry.

The Concord House Brothers themselves point to the leadership and sacrifice of Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah as the primary reason for the fruitfulness of Concord House Ministry. But Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah recognize it is more than just them. It is the faithful commitment of each brother in each generation passing the baton one by one in response to the work of the Spirit in their midst. It is a risky endeavor, requiring vulnerability and trust from the Kims and vulnerability and trust from each brother. Not everyone stuck with it. Many departed along the way. But the Kims have no regrets for there is "no other way" than to follow Jesus, no matter the cost.

Key Conclusions for Formational Discipleship in Community

In this section, I seek to draw five key conclusions for formational discipleship in community from the work of this project. First, committed relationships are core to discipleship. Discipleship is fundamentally not concerned with knowledge transfer, behavioral change, or emotional experience, but about countering the effects of sin in our lives to the glory and purpose of God. If the core of sin is the destruction of all relationships in our lives, beginning with our relationship with God, then discipleship must involve the restoration of those relationships with

God, others, and self. Moreover, as Dr. Rebekah argues, “Transformation of character comes through discipleship in the context of deep, lifetime relationship and accountability, which can seldom be engendered in a program of a set length.”¹¹ True spiritual leaders inspire their sheep to imitate the character they embody and propagate the life of the church to the next generation.¹² And “covenantal” peer relationships provide the “commitment, honesty, and trust required in mutual correction and accountability.”¹³ Such relationships require shared vision, stability, and resolve to obey the call of Christ.

Secondly, committed relationships are a central element of discipleship irrespective of generation. While some distinctions did emerge between Gen X, millennials, and Gen Z, the commonalities were significantly more pronounced. There are a few possible explanations for this surprising outcome. Differences might have flattened over time as house residents were shaped by their experiences together. It is possible that distinctions would be clearer among those who chose to move on from the house. The lack of generational distinctions is also possibly reflective of the fact that the core of our sin and our brokenness remains the same, regardless of how it might surface in a particular historical-cultural context. Choung’s three spiritual questions – “what is real, good, and beautiful” – outlined in Chapter 1 are meaningfully engaged in the context of Concord House but not along generational lines. Nevertheless, leadership across generations does require a kind of “generational intelligence” to identify the difference between generational preference and biblical imperative.¹⁴ This generational intelligence is what one Concord Brother described as Dr. Rebekah’s “youthfulness” and ability to “connect even with

¹¹ Rebekah Kim, “Raising Future Leaders,” 78.

¹² Rebekah Kim, “Raising Future Leaders,” 79.

¹³ Rebekah Kim, “Raising Future Leaders,” 81.

¹⁴ The idea of “generational intelligence” is drawn from “cultural intelligence” as described in: Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013), 147.

those who could be her grandchildren.”¹⁵ Generational intelligence enables a leader to know when to be flexible and how to embody biblical truth in a way that communicates and inspires. It is worth noting that Asian Americans, whether born abroad or in the United States, naturally build a cultural intelligence navigating between the cultures of their families and their life in America, experiences that are readily transferrable to navigating between generations.

Thirdly, the fundamental barrier to relationship with God and others is the self. What stands in the way, preventing a sinner from reconciling with God and with others? The ego. For this reason, the call to be a disciple is a call to “deny yourself and take up your cross daily” (Luke 9:23). And if self is the barrier, we are simply unable to remove that barrier on our own. It is only possible by the work of the Spirit through the people of God. We are to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another (James 5:16), confront each other’s sins (Matt 18:15), rebuke one another (1 Tim 5:20), wash one another’s feet (John 13:14-15), exhort one another every day (Heb 3:13), and bear with one another in patience and love (Eph 4:2). That the true barrier to following Christ is our ego is clearly displayed in the discussions with Concord Brothers, all pointing to the self as bearing the brunt of spiritual challenge at Concord House.

Fourthly, the Koinonia Cross model is a paradigm for balanced and abundant spiritual relationships that provide the conditions necessary for formational discipleship. Let us remind ourselves of David Currie’s definition of formational discipleship: “the lifelong, faith-filled process of the Holy Spirit transforming the whole person from fallen malformation into the loving likeness of Christ to the glory of the Father as informed by the whole word of God, in relationship with the whole people of God to fulfill the whole mission of God.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Focus Group Y2, February 15, 2024.

¹⁶ David A. Currie, “Shaped by the Word: *Sola Scriptura* for Spiritual Formation” in Gordon L. Isaac and Eckhard Schnabel, eds, *Reformation Celebration: The Significance of Scripture, Grace, Faith, and Christ* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2018), Kindle Locations 1379-1384.

Lifelong: Koinonia Cross calls me to enter into lifelong covenantal relationships.

Faith-filled: The mere act of entering a covenantal relationship is only possible by having faith in the *hesed* (steadfast lovingkindness) of God in and through a fellow child of God.

Process: Koinonia Cross relationships are not a program to be mastered or a criteria to be fulfilled. There is no earthly end. It is continual process of growing deeper and loving more until we enter eternity together with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit transforming: There is no doubt who is accomplishing the work of transformation. One impossible sinner cannot transform another. But nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37)!

The whole person: Not just the outer part or the inner part; not just what I can see or what I choose to show. The whole person, fully known in the web of intimate, vulnerable, risky, lifelong relationships with leaders, peers, sheep, and spouse, each of whom see and impact a different part of my whole person.

From fallen malformation: The web of Koinonia Cross relationships provides a 360 mirror so I can continually see the fullness of my fallen malformation.

Into the loving likeness of Christ: The likeness of Christ becomes immanent in the lives of my shepherds who embody a living loving likeness of Christ and inspire me to imitate.

To the glory of the Father: In the Koinonia Cross, no one member is elevated above the others. Christ is in the center and God is at the top. As every member of my Koinonia Cross is transformed together, to God be the glory.

As informed by the whole word of God: The foundation of every Koinonia Cross relationship is not our compatibility, the convenience of circumstance, or our own faithfulness. It is only the whole word of God and the word incarnate in Jesus Christ, his death, his resurrection, and his promised return.

In relationship with the whole people of God: In the context of Koinonia Cross relationships, I become acutely aware that I stand in relation to God not on my own, but in the line of the spiritual Via Egnatia with the whole people of God. But entering into relationship with that whole people begins with those who are right next to me: my leader, my immediate peer, my immediate sheep, and my spouse. If I cannot know them and love them, what claim do I have to love to my own church, much less the whole people of God?

To fulfill the whole mission of God: What is the whole mission of God? To love him, to love others, and to let the world know that love. That mission inherently requires the unity with Christ and his church that can be realized through Koinonia Cross relationships.

Lastly, Concord House is one form of an ideal setting for building Koinonia Cross relationships. Available and teachable young men are nestled within a web of older, younger, and peer-aged brothers. They share all aspects of worship and common life: knowing and being known, loving and being loved. They learn to bear responsibility for one another and share responsibility for others in need. They are united with a common vision and commitment to God, his church, and one another. And all stand under the common spiritual leadership of a house father and house mother who embody what it means to follow Christ faithfully and who possess the love and experience to channel and direct this band of brothers to sharpen and polish one another (Isa 49:2) for God's glory and mission, not hurt and destroy each other (Gal 5:19-21).

During our 30th anniversary trip, we visited the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence. Upon entry to the main hall bearing the sculptures of Michelangelo – the prized possessions of the museum – the first four on display are commonly known as the “unfinished sculptures.” These unfinished masterpieces in process display “slaves” or “prisoners” halfway sculpted out of large marble blocks, giving the distinct sense of men struggling to escape from their prisons of marble. It is almost as if they plead with their sculptor to finish his work and set them free. It is unknown whether Michelangelo intentionally left them incomplete for this very reason, but regardless, the visual effect is striking. At the end of the corridor underneath a gigantic dome bathed in gentle light stands Michelangelo's greatest masterpiece – the Statue of David. Towering more than double the height of the unfinished prisoners, David magnificently displays the genius of his creator. In his completed perfection, he speaks to the unfinished sculptures as if to show what they could become if Michelangelo would only complete the work he had begun.

Inspired by this scene, Dr. Rebekah challenged us as unfinished prisoners of sin to surrender ourselves to the hammer and chisel of God, our master sculptor.¹⁷ To be chiseled is undoubtedly painful, but God already has a finished masterpiece in mind and surely “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion” (Phil 1:6). Our God employs different chisels to accomplish his work: our spiritual leaders, our peers, our sheep, and our spouse. Amid that painful process, we are encouraged when we see the other unfinished sculptures around us – some more complete, some less – and we know we are not striving alone but together. We see the evidence of God’s love and mastery in each of them. When we lift up our eyes from ourselves, we behold ahead the perfect completion of who we are to become in our eldest brother Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29).

Navigating the Tensions

For all the strengths of Concord House and its close alignment with the long history of communities of formational discipleship, as with any attempt at radical discipleship in community, tensions exist that must be navigated with much prayer and wisdom from the Spirit. Firstly, the Concord House focus on raising leaders brings forth a question: is every Christian called to be a leader? If not, does such a brother have a place at Concord House? On the one hand, there are numerous examples of brothers over the years who did not have “typical” attributes of leadership yet found opportunities to employ their gifts to serve God and his church even if not on the “front lines.” On the other hand, the scope of this thesis-project did not include those who departed Concord House, some of whom had negative experiences in part because of

¹⁷ This spiritual illustration of Concord House is taken directly from Dr. Rebekah’s reflections on this scene during our trip in January 2024.

the emphasis on leadership training in the context of discipleship. Concord House must prayerfully and thoughtfully consider this question as it looks to the future.

Secondly, the Concord House emphasis on Koinonia Cross relationships opens the community to the risk of someone focusing on visible human relationships while neglecting the central relationship with Christ under the lordship of God. To this end, the day together must be balanced with the day alone. While ultimate responsibility lies in the hands of each Concord House Brother to tend to his own relationship with God, house leaders must take responsibility to establish rhythms catalyzing the cultivation of relationship with God, model this balance in their own lives, and discern the early warning signs that a house resident needs support in this area before unwanted spiritual consequences occur. When a tendency to focus on humanistic relationships goes unchecked, it has resulted in experiences of burnout and bitterness. Concord House Ministry must be aware of this tendency, especially among less mature believers, and provide regular opportunities to encourage personal devotion, engage in self-reflection, and make needed adjustments. In this respect, it is helpful that most brothers have a spiritual leader who does not reside at Concord House and can provide additional perspective for the brother.

Thirdly, striving for spiritual unity in the context of charismatic leadership can be easily misunderstood and lead to unintended consequences. The stronger the unity and the more radical the obedience, the more a community risks becoming insular and even drawing comparisons with cult-like behavior. True spiritual unity draws together the people of God in the context of our diversity. Unity should not lead to uniformity. As Concord House strives toward unity of vision and unity around a shared rule of life, house leaders should continue to encourage personal conviction, critical thinking, and individual expression to create a thick, sturdy unity, not a flimsy, dimensionless uniformity. This point is closely related to the second point above;

each brother must choose and act out of his own personal relationship with God and his personal understanding of the word of God. For some brothers, living out of personal conviction comes naturally. For others, it is easier to just unthinkingly follow. Concord House leaders must be aware of this tendency and disciple brothers to listen to and obey the voice of God through the word of God.

Fourthly, the call to love one another as Jesus loved us should not be regarded as an end in and of itself. Jesus' charge in John 13:34-35 to "love one another just as I have loved you" is not a command for the church to be inwardly focused, turning away from others, and building a wall of separation, but rather a command to be open, to engage, and to invite others in: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples...." When the church loves as Jesus loved, it opens its arms to embrace the world, calling the world to join together in accepting the truth and grace of the cross and become disciples of Jesus. Concord House must maintain its openness to welcoming the stranger and the outcast. It must continue to be a city of refuge for all who would knock on its gate. Those "strangers" hold Concord House accountable to live out what we teach and proclaim.

Implications for Concord House and Beyond

This thesis-project has provided a rare opportunity to self-examine an ongoing ministry and prepare ourselves to endure for another generation ahead. The very process of research has catalyzed continued reflection and conversation among Concord House Brothers, especially as we mark this 30th anniversary year. It has left us grateful and in awe of the work of Spirit and resolved not to squander what Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah have sacrificed their lives for.

This year, our church has heard a call to return to our original roots of discipleship and evangelism. This project has reminded us of the original roots of Concord House Ministry and inspired us to return to those roots as well, pruning anything unnecessary and undesirable, pursuing that which produces spiritual leaders who will take up the cross, love God and one another, and make disciples who will do the same. We are hopeful that the disciples raised at Concord House will faithfully continue to build the ministry of Concord House for future generations and create similar living-in-community discipleship ministries across our network of churches. Concord House “alumni” have already helped to spawn offshoots in our churches in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Tbilisi, Georgia.

Such disciples cannot be produced through a curriculum or a program.¹⁸ It requires time and devotion. “Ministry technicians” are easy and quick to train. But true spiritual leaders inspire. Anyone can master the first book of the Suzuki Method for piano. But only a true master like Korean phenom Yunchan Lim can play Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 3 with the artistry and expression the composer himself intended. Such mastery can only be formed through God-given capacity, hard practice, and long-term devotion. Every child of God has the capacity to love God and love one another because we are made in the image of God. The rest is up to us. There are no shortcuts. We must develop our inner person with depth and over time. The fruit of Concord House has taken 30 years of house ministry, 43 years of Berkland Baptist Church, and more than 50 years of Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah following Christ.

Can the principles outlined here be adopted by others? Insofar as what has occurred is biblically grounded and the work of the Spirit, most certainly! But it is not a formula or a

¹⁸ The following insights were shared by Dr. Rebekah Kim at Concord House on the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the Kim family (Dr. Paul, Dr. Rebekah, Grandma Ho Re, Pauline, and Philip) moving into Concord House, February 29, 2024.

strategy. It is a story of a people wholly devoted to love, trust, and obey God and his word, no matter the cost. That story will look different among different people, in different places, and at different times. But the main character remains the same. If we cling to Him and his people, like Ruth to Naomi, God will surely bring to completion his promise and the good work he has begun in us.

Concluding Thoughts

In the book *How the West Really Lost God*, Mary Eberstadt argues that the breakdown of the family resulted in the failure of the family to pass down religious beliefs and values, leading to children losing and abandoning the God of their parents.¹⁹ While Eberstadt makes a compelling and well-supported argument, the deeper spiritual question does not concern “the West” but rather the church. How did the church lose the power of its witness in the world? What happened to the church of the New Testament, the church that turned the Roman Empire upside down? Is it possible that in our modern radical individualism, we have lost sight of the original vision of the church for formational discipleship in community, modeled by Jesus and the 12, practiced by the early church, passed down through the monastic tradition, carried on by the Moravians and at Finkenwalde, and continued in some humble way at Concord House?

I conclude with an insight from Gordon Smith in *Institutional Intelligence*.²⁰ The potential of an institution to fulfill its mission in an ever-changing environment requires the resiliency to respond, adapt, and innovate. And that resiliency is born out of two, inseparable capacities: realism and hopefulness. Smith argues that an institution can only fulfill its mission

¹⁹ Mary Eberstadt, *How the West Really Lost God: A New Theory of Secularization* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2013).

²⁰ Gordon T. Smith, “A Generative Institutional Culture: Fostering Hopeful Realism,” *Institutional Intelligence: How to Build an Effective Organization* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 107-130.

over time if it can name and face the reality of its context while simultaneously seeing the possibilities and potential amid that reality. Though all of us at Concord House would shirk at the idea of calling our home an institution, “hopeful realism” captures the truth and power of the Gospel we have experienced over the past 30 years and represents a guiding principle for the future.

At Concord, we were all confronted with the ugly realism of who we are as broken sinners. We were humbled, dismayed, and even in despair. But in the love of God displayed in the cross of Christ, we saw hope: hope for cleansing, forgiveness, restoration, and transformation. And that hope became a new reality actualized in the Koinonia Cross relationships we formed at Concord House. Hopeful realism is not a one-time experience but is repeated again and again as we see our sinful selves more clearly, only to discover that the grace of God goes deeper still. And our leaders, peers, sheep, and spouse stick with us through every low and every high, bound together in that life-long, faith-filled process that will one day come to completion when our Lord fulfills his final promise and our hope becomes our reality:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.... Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God (1 Pet 1:3-4, 22-23).

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: Raising future missional leaders through Koinonia-Cross relationships in a house-based discipleship community in Cambridge, MA

Principal Investigator: **Daniel Cho, Doctor of Ministry Program
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**

Purpose

This is a research study. The purpose of this research study is to examine how the “Concord House Brothers” house-based discipleship community in Cambridge, MA, has consistently and effectively trained college students and young adults of the past 30 years to become missional leaders. This study will form the basis for a Doctor of Ministry thesis-project in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The results of the study will be helpful for those desiring to create house-based discipleship communities.

The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. You may ask any questions about the study, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear.

I am inviting you to participate in this research study because you are/were member-in-residence at Concord House and are/were part of the Concord House Brother’s ministry.

Procedures

If you agree to participate, your involvement will last for approximately 120 minutes.

The following procedures are involved in this study. You will be asked to participate in one 90-minute focus group which may be recorded for data capture purposes. And you will be asked to fill out one anonymous survey.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this program.

Benefits

There are no personal benefits for participating, but church leaders and disciplers may benefit from this study through understanding the factors that have made Concord House Brothers ministry fruitful and effective.

Compensation

You will not be compensated for participating in this research project.

Confidentiality

Records of participation in this research project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Notes from the focus groups will contain coded names and will be stored on a private Google Drive accessible only to the project lead. Recordings from the focus groups will be stored on a private Google Drive accessible only to the project lead and will be deleted after the completion of the project. In the event of any report or publication from this study, your identity will not be disclosed. Results will be reported in a summarized manner in such a way that you cannot be identified.

Voluntary Participation

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to take part, or if you stop participating at any time, your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. Any data collected from the participant prior to withdrawal be included in the study results.

Questions

Questions are encouraged. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Daniel Cho, [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Co-Chair of the Institutional Review Board, David A. Currie, at: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED].

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Name (printed):

(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Concord House Brothers Ministry: 5 minute Demographic Survey

Thank you for filling this out ! These basic demographics will be part of chapter 1 of my D.Min. dissertation about Concord House Ministry. Hopefully this survey is easy! I'll be asking more weighty questions in the future.

Please fill this out by Sunday Nov 26 if possible. Thank you!

Dan



Not shared

* Indicates required question

First and Last Name *

Your answer

Date of Birth *

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

Year you began attending our church *

Your answer

Year you moved into Concord House *

Your answer

Year you moved out of Concord House (put N/A if still living there) *

Your answer

What ministry were you part of when you moved in? *

- ☐ College ministry
- ☐ Young Adult ministry
- ☐ ISM
- ☐ Youth
- ☐ Other:

What year did you become a Christian? *

Your answer

When you moved into Concord House, what was your status? *

- ☐ College student
- ☐ Graduate student
- ☐ Working
- ☐ Option 4
- ☐ Other:

Were you a "staff" or "intern" at our church when you moved in? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Did you become a Christian after you moved into Concord House? *

- ☐ Yes, while I was living at Concord House
- ☐ Yes, but not while I was living at Concord House (e.g., on the mission field or at another church)
- ☐ No

Are you a PK or MK at our church? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you are a PK or MK at our church, when did you move (or move back) to Boston?

Your answer

What is your terminal (highest) academic degree (including your current program * if you are in school)? (You may choose more than one)

- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ MD
- ☐ JD
- ☐ MBA
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Other:

List all universities from which you have a degree (including your current program * if you are in school).

Your answer

What was your major in college? *

Your answer

If you are currently working full-time, what is your job? (in 10 words or less)

Your answer

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Concord House Brothers - Anonymous Questionnaire

This **anonymous** questionnaire is designed to explore the key factors contributing to the effectiveness of the "Concord House Brothers" house-based discipleship community in Cambridge, MA.

The information you provide will be helpful for those desiring to train missional leaders through a house-based discipleship community. This study is being conducted by Daniel Cho, college pastor at Antioch Baptist Church. Please be assured that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The information that you provide will be presented only in summary form, in combination with the responses of other participants in this study. The answers that you give will never be linked with your name. By completing this questionnaire, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study.

[Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Which one most closely resembles your mindset when you moved into Concord House? (Choose only 1 - I know it's hard) *

- ☐ I want to be spiritually trained to love and serve God and His church.
- ☐ I want to live with other Christians (and be set apart from campus culture).
- ☐ I'm trusting the advice of others that Concord House will be good for my spiritual life.
- ☐ Concord House seems like a fun and meaningful place to live.
- ☐ I have a (desperate) need that Concord House will help me with.
- ☐ Other:

The most commonly cited vision of Concord House is to "raise leaders." How would you articulate the purpose of these leaders? Finish this sentence: "Concord House is raising leaders who..." *

Your answer

Please identify the source of the two most significant spiritual markers (spiritually transformative experiences) resulting from your time at Concord House.

	Spiritual Marker #1	Spiritual Marker #2
A specific Bible message delivered at CH	☐	☐
Conflict with a peer	☐	☐
Direct correction from a leader	☐	☐
Someone else being corrected by a leader	☐	☐
Conviction from personal prayer or personal Bible study	☐	☐
Personal struggle or circumstance where CH provided support	☐	☐
Answered prayer at Concord House (salvation, repentance, health, etc.)	☐	☐
House retreat or trip	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐

If you marked "other" above, please explain:

Your answer

How would you describe your personal desire and willingness (not readiness) to take on spiritual leadership, such as becoming a campus director, going to seminary, or becoming a long-term missionary? (Of course, assuming you would seek the input and guidance of spiritual leaders and peers.) *

- ☐ I am willing whenever my leaders and peers think I am ready (or I already am).
- ☐ I am willing but I can't imagine that within the next 10 years.
- ☐ I don't have personal desire for that but I would seriously pray and consider if suggested.
- ☐ I don't see that in my future, but I am willing to serve God and His church in other ways.
- ☐ I don't have any desire to serve actively in ministry.

Out of the list below, choose the TWO traits in you that were most helped (transformed) by life at Concord House. (Please choose 2.) *

- ☐ Ambition
- ☐ Fear of taking risks (relational, life decisions - anything that requires faith)
- ☐ Independence and self-reliance
- ☐ Self-confidence and pride
- ☐ Lack of personal spiritual disciplines
- ☐ Lack of trust for others
- ☐ Lack of vision for your life
- ☐ Mental health challenges - depression, anxiety, lack of motivation, etc.
- ☐ Online/digital practices
- ☐ Skepticism or dissatisfaction with life
- ☐ Skepticism or dissatisfaction with Christianity / church

Rank the importance of these on-going ministries in your spiritual formation and discipleship during your first 10 years (or less) at our church in Boston. You should have only one check mark in each numbered column. *

	1 (Most important)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (least important)
Experience before coming to our church	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sunday worship service and/or Sunday school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campus / department ministry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Class ministry (if you experienced that)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Concord House ministry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outside resources (books, online media, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Church-wide Bible ministry (church Bible studies, BSI, BMS, retreats)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prayer meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Which best describes your current commitment to our church? *

- ☐ I foresee spending the rest of my life with this church, unless God clearly calls me elsewhere.
- ☐ As far as I can see into the future, I plan to remain at this church, but it's hard to imagine what my life will be like in 10 or 20 years.
- ☐ I'm grateful to be here and will remain as long as life circumstances don't lead me elsewhere.
- ☐ I'm grateful to be here for now, but I'm still figuring out how God is leading my life and where I want to be long-term.

When were you born? *

- ☐ Prior to 1981
- ☐ 1981-1994
- ☐ 1995-2000

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Why did you move into Concord House? What motivated or compelled you to join?
2. What characteristics did you have that enabled you to stick with it and be discipled? (Compared to peers who chose not to.)
3. How was the vision of Concord House articulated when you lived there?
4. What kinds of house rhythms, practices, standards, expectations, or norms did you and your housemates commit to for any period of time? (Formal and informal are both relevant.)
5. What does/did living together enable or cultivate in your formation that might not have been as readily accessible outside of community life?
6. Which of your natural tendencies, traits, or perspectives does/did Concord House challenge and how?
7. What are the challenges/pitfalls of community life with regard to discipleship?
8. How did Concord House foster / nourish all four sets of Koinonia-Cross relationships in your life? (even after you moved out)
9. How would you describe the role of Dr. Paul and/or Dr. Rebekah in short phrases?
10. How does/did Concord House contribute toward your vision and heart for a life of ministry/mission?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DRS. PAUL AND REBEKAH KIM

1. Why did you decide to allow single, young men to live with you, instead of another family?
2. What was the original vision of Concord House, and how has it changed today, if at all?
3. What is the value of living together when it comes to discipleship?
4. How does living together help form Koinonia-Cross relationships?
5. Why do you think Concord House has been so fruitful for so many years?
6. What are the challenges/pitfalls of discipleship in community?

APPENDIX F

“HERE IS LOVE”

Lyrics to the Concord House theme song

Here is Love

Lyrics: William Rees (1802-1883)

Verse 1

Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Lovingkindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life, our Ransom,
Shed for us His precious blood.

Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten,
Throughout heav'n's eternal days.

Verse 2

On the mount of crucifixion,
Fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's mercy
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.

Grace and love, like mighty rivers,
Poured incessant from above,
And heav'n's peace and perfect justice
Kissed a guilty world in love.

APPENDIX G

SWOT ANALYSIS OF CONCORD HOUSE MINISTRY

As a means of establishing context for this thesis-project, the following is a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of Concord House Ministry.

Strengths

- Clearly and frequently articulated vision
- 30-year legacy and tradition
- Faithful, committed, expert leadership under Drs. Paul and Rebekah Kim
- Established spiritual and communal practices, norms, culture, identity
- Steady future pipeline through weekend and summer residents
- Clear leadership structure with older brothers
- Internal accountability with peers
- High standards of spiritual excellence
- Proximity to worldwide ministry hub of Antioch's church network

Weaknesses

- High standard difficult for some to meet
- Established practices and norms can obscure those who are struggling or need more time
- Strong identity can make others feel excluded
- Group unity can limit opportunity for personal expression
- Lack of space for summer residents
- Managing house life requires significant time investment from leadership
- Proximity to worldwide ministry hub can require significant time investment
- No established practice to aid those transitioning out of communal life
- Leadership structure can stifle opportunity for initiative especially from younger residents

Opportunities

- Engage in regular prayer, discussion and fellowship among leadership, apart from entire house
- Concord House 4 will significantly increase living space when prepared for residents
- Increase alumni involvement for future leadership
- Create support structures and programs for those transitioning out
- Take the risk to create space for personal initiative and expression
- Establish rhythms and delegate roles to balance time demands

Threats

- Incoming students raised in less religious families and contexts
- Orthodox Biblical faith increasingly marginalized among intellectual elite

- Increasing emphasis on job preparation and global experience leaves students with less room for spiritual pursuits and embodied presence
- Increasingly digital generation less interested in communal life
- Increasingly digital generation entering with less experience and understanding of relationships and navigating life together
- Health of Drs. Paul and Rebekah

APPENDIX H

SERMON: “FROM DEBTORS TO VICTORS”

I preached this testimonial sermon about Concord House Ministry on November 8, 2023, at Seoul National University in Seoul, Korea, at a mid-week campus worship service.

“From Debtors to Victors”

1 Samuel 22:1-2

David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And there were with him about four hundred men.

Introduction

I have a special relationship to Seoul National University. My father is an SNU alum. And my spiritual mentor for the past 31 years, Dr. Rebekah Kim, is also a graduate of SNU. Want to share from a passage that describes how I have experienced God over the past 30 years in the context of our church ministry.

Setting

What is the setting in this passage? God has already abandoned Saul and Samuel has already anointed David as King over Israel. And yet where is David? He is living in a cave, in hiding. It took 15 years until Saul died and David actually ascended the throne of Judah.

During those 15 years, God was not idle, he was not merely waiting for Saul. God was at work. Even when God seems silent, when it seems God's purpose is not accomplished, when it seems God's will is thwarted by the sin of human beings and by the schemes of the ruler of the world, God is at work.

What was God doing in the Cave of Adullam?

1. God gathers the debtors

First of all, God gathers the debtors.

When David hid from Saul in the Cave of Adullam, who gathered to him? Our text says those who were in distress, those who were in debt, and those who were bitter in soul. In other words, the weak. The losers.

Those who were powerful, wealthy and successful under Saul's reign had no reason to gather with David in a cave. They were content with the continuing reign of a false king.

But those who suffered under Saul's reign – they looked forward to a new king. Simply put, they needed David. They had nowhere else to go.

The Cave of Adullam is a picture of the church. A gathering of the weak, of those in need. These are the people who come to God. These are the people who sought out Jesus in the Gospels.

The strong and the rich do not need God.

I have spent much of my life striving to be strong. Laboring to overcome my weakness. I did not want to need anyone. I wanted people to need me. It was this determination that drove me to Harvard.

How is it that people like us – those at Harvard and SNU, those whom the world regards as strong and rich – can become part of God's church? How is it that we can gather with Jesus in the Cave of Adullam?

Because we come to realize that we are in fact debtors. We owe God a debt we can never repay. We come to realize that we are weak. We are powerless to overcome the power of our flesh. We are in distress over the meaninglessness of life in the face of the inescapable reality of death.

Praise God for every relationship, every experience that leads us to confess we are weak. Just because we are weak, we can come to Jesus.

God has used many experiences in my life to show me just how weak I am, just how much of a debtor I am.

One of the most formative experiences was the 16 years I spent living with other Christian brothers during college and after college, until I got married at age 34. (I know, kind of late!) We lived together in a duplex owned by Dr. Paul Kim and his wife Dr. Rebekah Kim, the founding couple of Antioch Baptist Church. They lived in the downstairs unit, and we lived in the upstairs unit. The house is about 5 minutes away from Harvard on a street named "Concord Avenue" – so we called the house "Concord House."

The decision to live together began with a confession of weakness – the 5 of us were attending 5 different universities in Boston and we each felt spiritually alone on our campus. Once we started to live together, and under the leadership of Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah, I was confronted with my weakness in a new way every day. Putting a bunch of young guys together, all with different personalities, habits, and perspectives, we clashed all the time. Serious issues such as how to best witness to friends on campus. And trivial ones like what temperature to set the heater in the house. Over those years, I realized I was utterly selfish, full of pride, stubborn and unyielding. I realized that I was just unlovable. And I realized what an undeserved blessing it was to have people in my life who were willing to stick with me anyway. In a way, my salvation became real as I confessed daily I was a debtor in need of God and in need of his church.

What is the church? A gathering of those who need Jesus and need one another. We are united by our weakness, not by our strength.

At Harvard, there are hundreds of student clubs, and many of them are very competitive to enter. You have to prove how good you are, how strong you are. They call the application processing a “comp.” “Comp” is for “competence.” I tell Harvard students that our church comp process is to show how weak you are, not how strong you are. The church is a gathering of the weak.

Let us boldly and freely proclaim that we need Jesus and we need one another. Like those who came to David in the Cave of Adullam, we are not content with our lives under the reign of the current ruler of this world. We desire a new king, an eternal king. One who will usher in the true, glorious kingdom of God.

2. God trains warriors

After God gathers the weak in the Cave of Adullam, what does he do? God trains warriors.

400 loser men gather with David in the Cave of Adullam. What does David do? He does not simply wait for Saul to die. He doesn’t complain to God, “Why have you sent me such useless men?” Verse 2 says he becomes commander over them.

In other words, he received this seemingly random gathering of weak, poor men, and he took command, and he trained them to become warriors.

Once again, this is a picture of the church. When we come together, Jesus becomes our commander, and he trains us to become spiritual warriors.

Training requires self-denial for a greater purpose. It means learning a new way of life. And cutting out the unnecessary from our lives.

One of our Harvard students is taking time off from school after finishing his freshman year at Harvard in order to serve in the Korean Army now. He is serving at the DMZ. Citizens of Korea and citizens of Israel have one thing in common – they both understand the importance of having an army ready for battle. Both countries face the constant threat of attack. In America, war always seems far away, so we are often too comfortable and too relaxed.

This student told me about all the hard training he had to do in basic training in order to be ready to be stationed at the DMZ. Spiritually, we must realize that we are living in a time of war, not in a time of peace. We have an enemy who is always looking for a chance to attack.

I experienced spiritual basic training when I lived at Concord House. Dr. Paul and Dr. Rebekah trained us to pray, to study and honor the word of God. They trained me to deny myself and take up my cross every day to obey Jesus and love my fellow brothers as Jesus loved me. And they challenged me to share God’s vision to establish his kingdom in the lives of others through repentance and through the ministry of God’s church.

These changes in my life did not come naturally or easily. It came through training in the Cave of Adullam. I thank God for the spiritual trainers in my life who have helped me to become a warrior in God's army.

3. God produces victors

God gathers the weak, he trains warriors, and finally, he produces victors.

What becomes of David and his band of 400?

Because of the training in the Cave of Adullam, these men become the warriors who fight alongside David, defeating the enemies of Israel and building the kingdom of Israel to its greatest height.

In 2 Samuel 23, the best of these trained warriors are called "the mighty men." And in 2 Samuel 21:22 – we read that David and his warriors killed 4 remaining giants, ones who were like Goliath.

In other words, through David's leadership and training in the Cave of Adullam, these debtors became mighty men, they became giant slayers. They became victors.

From debtors to victors.

When we are with Jesus, when we submit to his training in the Cave of Adullam, in the church, we are transformed from debtors to victors.

Our purpose in the church is to produce spiritual warriors who can defeat the spiritual giants in ourselves and in others. To claim victory for the glory of God and the kingdom of God, not for our own glory nor our own kingdom. God did not call us to the Cave of Adullam so that we could settle down and be comfortable. He did not call us to make us rich and strong in the eyes of the world. He called us to rescue us from the world, to train us to become warriors and to send us out to fight for his victory in the life of every lost sinner.

In the eyes of the world, the church is hidden, invisible, like David's men in the Cave of Adullam. But in that hidden place, God is at work. He is raising up the men and women who will accomplish his purpose in the world. The men and women who will defeat the enemy and establish God's reign in the lives of every human being.

Our Concord House ministry first began in September 1993, so it has been 30 years. To celebrate our 30th anniversary, we are taking a reunion trip to Greece and Italy to follow in the footsteps of Apostle Paul's missionary journeys. 56 brothers who have been trained through Concord House ministry will gather on this trip. 5 of us are pastors, many are missionaries and deacons. On this trip, we will give thanks to God for his mercy and his victory in our lives and recommit ourselves to keep fighting for his purpose and his church. This past year, Dr. Rebekah renamed Concord House as "Concord Cave of Adullam." We pray that many more warriors will continue to be trained and sent out from our Concord Cave of Adullam.

Conclusion

As I close, I thank God for the ministries, churches, and believers who are serving God's purpose here at SNU. Just like at Harvard, I'm sure it must not be easy to follow Jesus here. I pray that even when the church is invisible, that God is accomplishing his purpose, training up warriors in the Cave of Adullam who will claim his victory in the lives of many here on this campus.

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